

Vinaya-Patrikā

Of Goswami Tulsidas:

A Book of Devotion, Supplication & True Love for God

(Original Text, Roman Transliteration and
English Exposition with Notes, Appendices and Index)

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English Exposition by:--

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Ayodhya (Faizabad, U.P.)

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.
Mobile: +919451290400, +919935613060

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

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DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED LORD RAM

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same 'Parmatma', the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be 'his very own' is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram whom even Lord Shiva had revered and worshipped. And surely of course to Lord Hanuman who was a manifestation of Shiva himself. Finding no words to express my profound gratitude to Ram, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

“He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!” [A Hymn]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
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PREFACE

Goswami Tulsidas {birth: Samvat 1589, corresponding to 1532 A.D; death: Samvat 1680, corresponding to A.D. 1623} was one of the greatest saint-poet-philosophers of 16th century India. He was a prolific writer par-excellence of devotional literature, was a realised soul who had established a direct communion with Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being, and the masterly skill and wise craftsmanship with which he weaved great metaphysical and spiritual Truths so intricately into the texts that they gelled in perfectly, comfortably and un-intrusively with the broader framework of texts of his various books have no match in the history of Devotional Hindi Literature of India.

The present book called the ‘Vinai-Patrika’ was his last composition, penned roughly between Samvat 1631 and 1679 (A.D. 1574-1622), and was said to be completed a short while prior to his death. Acclaimed universally as a masterpiece of Hindi devotional literature, and highly venerated, deeply revered and immensely honoured for this achievement, majority of its verses are sung melodiously with the greatest of reverence and devotion among the masses in the Hindi belt of northern India.

‘Vinai-Patrika’, as the name suggests, means ‘prayerful and humble submission in the form of a petition or letter’. It is a remarkable “Book of Supplication and True Love for God” in the form of devotional prayers composed in a style wherein one communicates his feelings and emotions directly to the Lord God without any intermediary. In this sense, as well as in its spiritual content, depth and meaning, Vinai Patrika is quite like the Book of Psalms in the Holy Bible.

The Hymns and Prayers of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ have a universal spiritual message and an appeal for the whole of humankind though they are particularly dedicated to Lord Ram, an incarnation of the Supreme Being, because they are like a song arising from the inner core of a person’s heart, and as such they transcend the barriers of language and culture, and go beyond the actual words that have been used in their composition if they are truthfully and correctly interpreted and understood from a broader spiritual perspective.

This Book is a beautiful and an ever-green collection of devotional Hymns designed as Prayers that are offered to the Supreme Being who had manifested himself as Lord Ram, and are in fact authentic outpourings of Tulsidas’ heart which is

completely soaked in love, affection and devotion of the highest order for his Lord Ram. The hymns reflect a living being's eternal quest for peace and rest for his soul, his yearning for beatitude and felicity along with finding final emancipation and salvation for himself. The verses, having high emotional quotient on the one hand, are rich in the nectar of devotion for and submission to the Lord, and on the other hand they epitomize the distilled spiritual philosophy as enshrined in the Upanishads and other scriptures.

These prayers, as said earlier, find a parallel in a number of books of the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, for instance, the Psalms, the Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Similarly, in the Indian context, the prayers find a clear parallel in the Holy Book of Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib.

Vinai-Patrika is so powerful in its spiritual and emotional impact that once one begins to read it with dedication he is bound to be drowned in its surging waves of love, affection, devotion and submission for the Lord so much so that soon a time comes when his heart begins to strum its own melody of prayers for the Lord which resonate with those of the Vinai Patrika, and in due course of time this develops into a crescendo that completely submerges the person. It is then that he realises that his final emancipation and salvation is not far away.

Written in the form of excellent poetry, the Book is not only a petition of Tulsidas before the Lord to redeem him, but it also carries us along its swift currents into the deep recesses of the mind, the poignant thoughts and the sad heart of a great philosopher who was pained and hurt by the wayward, sinful, pervert and reckless ways of the world around him as he sincerely advises us to mend our ways. He is presenting us with the spiritual remedy for our ills in the form of hymns of the Vinai-Patrika. It represents the ultimate fruit of his life-long quest for the Truth that would bestow him with eternal bliss, peace, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

The prayers or psalms of Vinai Patrika are set to different 'Raagas' of classical Indian music that are meant to pluck the strings the harp of the heart, which then manifests its emotions and feelings in the form of melodious songs that are set to the tune of these Raagas, with the lyrics of the verses representing the voice of the heart. Therefore, the magic of these verses reveals itself only when they are sung in the particular Raaga in which they have been conceived and composed by the poet himself.

They are therefore also like a soulful rendering of the 'melody-of-the-heart', most moving, most emotional, most sublime, most ethereal, most succulent and most effective. They are not meant to be a mere formality, but are intended to harmonically touch and stir the inner core of the heart. They are marked by honesty and sincerity in their narration, and have depth and vision in their meaning.

In this respect, by the approval of Lord Lord Ram himself as clearly implied in the last two verse nos. 278-279, Vinai-Patrika can be termed as 'The Psalms of Lord Ram according to Tulsidas'. This is indeed 'a book of remembrance written before Him for those who fear (have love and affection for, are dedicated to, obedient and faithful to) the Lord and who meditate on His name. "They shall be mine", says the Lord of the hosts, "on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." (The Holy Bible, Old Testament, Malachi, 3/16-17.)

The 279 verses of this Book of Supplication and Loving Prayers called "Vinai Patrika" can be broadly classified into three categories—(i) Verses that are dedicated to different deities and are in the form of hymns; these constitute the first one-third

part of the Book. (ii) Verses that are dedicated to Lord Ram and his Holy Name, glorifying their greatness, divinity and holiness, and lay stress on the fact that if a seeker takes the shelter of Lord Ram and his Holy Name then all his temporal and spiritual welfare are taken care of; these verses constitute the second one-third part of the Book. These verses are rich in spiritual philosophy and wisdom, and give a practical advice to all in their pursuit of happiness and peace. (iii) And finally, the verses in last one-third part of the Book are primarily prayers offered by the saint-poet Tulsidas to his beloved Lord Sri Ram, seeking the Lord's mercy and grace upon him. This last part is unique in the sense that the great saint-poet has used a style of writing in which he directly addresses his beloved Lord Ram in the first person as if the Lord was standing right in front of him and listening to his prayers.

At the end of this wonderful Book we read that Tulsidas' urgency of appeal reaches its climax as he had a premonition of his impending death (verse no. 273), and therefore he asks the Lord not to delay his redemption any further. And the Lord readily agreed to his prayers as he accepted Tulsidas' petition and put his signature as a token of his endorsement of the saint's profound devotion, faith and affection for the Lord, accepting him, for all times to come, in the legion of his great devotees and followers (verse no. 279).

As we move along charmed by the wonderful text of Vinai Patrika, we come across splendidly narrated and most apt metaphors, similes, analogies, aphorisms and parables, some interwoven in the verses so as to mingle with them almost imperceptibly, and some others standing out with entire verses devoted to them. Some such brilliant examples are—The Village (vrs. 145, 210/4), the Palanquin (vrs. 189), The Womb (vrs. 136), The Lunar Fortnight (vrs. 203), The Havan (fire sacrifice—vrs. 108), The Kabandh (vrs 238), Aarti (vrs 47, 48), The Bird-Catcher (vrs. 208/2), The Spoilt-Coin (vrs 178), Holi (vrs. 203/17), The Bamboo (vrs. 114), The Parrot (vrs. 197/2), The Journey (vrs. 83, 136), The Dangling Sword (vrs. 200), What 'If' (vrs. 151), The Delusory Dance (vrs. 91), The Golden Opportunity (vrs. 202), Lanka (vrs. 58), The Forest (vrs. 59) etc. Then the poet-philosopher tells us who are our enemies (vrs. 187), who is a true friend (vrs. 174) and who is false (vrs. 147), the reasons for miseries (vrs. 168), the culprits occupying our heart (vrs. 125), various means of salvation (vrs. 103), utility of the human body (vrs. 201-202), how foolish are we (vrs. 92), why is there no peace (vrs. 246), why am I unhappy (vrs. 244) and the amazing list goes on and on, and is very awe inspiring and extensive.

It will be observed that Tulsidas has used a plethora of parables and fables from Hindu mythology and Purans. Without knowing the stories cited by Tulsidas, the hidden meaning in the verse will be lost. Therefore, wherever important mythological stories have been cited by Tulsidas in his composition, a note is added to the relevant verse so that the reader is enlightened about the context as he moves ahead with his reading.

Besides these legendary fables, elaborate notes are also added to the verses informing the reader about the varied philosophical and metaphysical aspects of the main theme of the concerned verse.

It ought to be remembered that translation or rendering of any original text into another language of a different culture is fraught with immense difficulties, and run the inherent risk of transgression, commission and omission, sometimes even leading to the lost of the message in the process. Keeping this point in mind I have been very careful, within the limits of my human abilities, to present to the reader the meaning and intent of the verses in a simple and easy-to-understand way as best as I could. Towards this end I have focused on being elaborate more often in my rendering

of the verses so that they become very clear to the reader, and have added notes to explain the verses and their underlying themes from different perspectives. Still, being an ordinary human undertaking such a gigantic task I may have surely committed errors of commission and omission at quite a few places, and for them I earnestly request the reader to forgive me, and focus instead on enjoying and imbibing the sweet and succulent nectar-like juice of divine love, devotion, affection, faith, conviction, humility and submission for the Lord that drips from the lines of this great Book, and thereby feel spiritually nourished and fulfilled by drinking the distilled essence of great philosophical doctrines of the Upanishads and other scriptures that are cleverly integrated into the texture of the pristinely beautiful verses of Vinai Patrika.

There are many verses of Vinai-Patrika which are very popular among the masses and are sung with the greatest of devotion and veneration, privately as well as during congregations. Appendix-1 at the end of the Book lists such verses.

The other appendices added at the end of this Book are the following: Appendix-2 presents a sample list of verses classified on the basis of their themes; Appendix-3 lists the verses on the basis of some selected keywords; Appendix-4 presents a brief life-sketch of the great saint-poet Goswami Tulsidas who had written this fantastic Book of Prayers; Appendix-5 has a letter written to Lord Ram by me, the author of the English rendering of this Book 'Vinai Patrika', that comes from the heart and is inspired by the reading and analysis of the verses of this exceptionally wonderful Book on the spiritually marvelous theme of devotion, surrender, love and affection for the Lord God; and finally Appendix-6 has a brief note on the other books by the same author.

I find myself most fortunate that Lord Ram has chosen me amongst the innumerable options he had to be his pen, and make this eternal Psalm come within reach of all those who do not know the dialect used in the original text by the Lord's great messenger Tulsidas. Further, I humbly wish to submit that 'I am become (just) as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal' (The Bible, Corinthians 1/13/1) for the Lord, and can't find words to thank him for his profound, all-encompassing love, kindness, grace and mercy, sparkling and dazzling like a bright star, splendorous and radiant like the sun, that he has so magnanimously showered upon me.

I honestly say I am unaware how this book was ever written, for it is beyond my humble capacity. But the fact that it did come into being is because the Lord wished it to be so, and on his inspiration Hanuman held the pen, and used my numb fingers to move it on and on. Therefore, I offer this book to Lord Ram even as Tulsidas had offered his own Vinai-Patrika at the holy feet of the Lord.

Before embarking upon this divine book of Hymns which is like the Psalms of the Holy Bible, I will say a little prayer based on the Bible for I am not competent to express the overwhelming feeling of gratitude and thanks-giving for my beloved Lord Ram that I can say any thing correctly, so it is wiser to rely on a Holy Text for this purpose.

I ask forgiveness from my beloved Lord Ram for all my incompetence and childishness by submitting before Him—'Oh Lord! I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know' (Bible, Job 42/2), but 'must I not take heed to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth?' (Bible, Numbers 23/12), for 'the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue (when I spoke what I said)' (Bible, 2 Samuel 23/2).

I write these books as a means of my thanksgiving to my Lord—‘Oh! Give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples’ (Bible, 1 Chronicles 16/8). For this purpose, I—‘Sing Psalms to Him; talk all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name. Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and his strength, seek His face everyone. Remember His marvelous works which He has done; His wonders and the judgments of His mouth’ (Bible, 1 Chronicles 16/8-12).

—‘O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and suckling hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightiest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visit him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou maddest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!’ (The Holy Bible, Old Testament, Psalm 8/1-9).

I wish to once again thank the Lord God of all—‘Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever’ (Bible, 1 Chronicles 16/34).

Before concluding I must express my thanks to Sri Somil Bharti who has done the Roman Transliteration of the original Hindi Text of Vinai Patrika for me.

Amen!

Date: 15th August, 2017

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.

Mobile: +919451290400, +919935613060

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

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Prayer offered to Lord Gaṇeśa

Rāga Bilāvala

(1)

गाइये गनपति जगबंदन । संकर-सुवन भवानी-नंदन ॥ 1 ॥
सिद्धि-सदन, गज-बदन, विनायक । कृपा-सिंधु, सुंदर, सब-लायक ॥ 2 ॥
मोदक-प्रिय, मुद-मंगल-दाता । विद्या-बारिधि, बुद्धि-विधाता ॥ 3 ॥
माँगत तुलसिदास कर जोरे । बसहिं रामसिय मानस मोरे ॥ 4 ॥

(1)

gā'iyē ganapati jagabandana. saṅkara-suvana bhavānī-nandana. 1.
sid'dhi-sadana, gaja-badana, vināyaka. kṛpā-sindhu, sundara, saba-lāyaka. 2.
mōdaka-priya, muda-maṅgala-dātā. vidyā-bāridhi, bud'dhi-vidhātā. 3.
māmṅata tulasidāsa kara jōrē. basahim rāmasiya mānasa mōrē. 4.

Verse no. 1—Sing the glories of Lord Ganpati (Ganesh), who is revered by the whole world and is the chief of Lord Shiva's followers. He is the beloved son of Lord Shiva and goddess Bhavani (Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva). (1).

He is the abode (treasury; fountainhead) of all Siddhis (mystical powers, achievements, attainments, successes in life). His face resembles that of an elephant. He is the destroyer (vanquisher, conqueror and eliminator) of all obstacles (that come in the way of an individual). He is an ocean of grace, kindness and benevolence. He is charming and beauteous. And he is able in every respect. (2).

He is very fond of Laddus (a ball-shaped sweet made from gram flour) [Here it means that he is fond of good things, such as wisdom, virtues, auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct etc.]. He is a bestower of happiness and joys as well as all kinds of auspiciousness and welfare. He is a fathomless ocean of knowledge. And (therefore) he is the Lord of wisdom and intellect. (3).

Tulsidas requests and pleads, with folded hands and with great earnestness and humility, to such a great Lord (Ganpati, the chief of the attendants of Lord Shiva) that he bless him so that Lord Ram and Sita (the divine consort of Lord Ram) may reside in his (Tulsidas') heart abidingly for eternity. (4).

[Note—Lord *Ganesh*—An entire Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda is dedicated to the theme of Lord Ganesh, and it is called the Ganapati Upanishad.

Lord *Ganapati* is also known as *Vinaayak*. Other names of Lord Ganapati are enumerated in the *Ganapati Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition as follows:— Lord Ganesh (refer verse no. 8); Ekdanta or the Lord with one tusk, Vakratunda or the Lord with a bent trunk (refer verse no. 10); Vraatpati or the one who is the chief amongst the Gods, Ganapati or the chief of the attendants of Lord Shiva, Pramathapati or the chief of a special category of attendants of Lord Shiva, known as Pramaths, who give immense misery to those who are sinful, Lambodar or the one with a big abdomen; pot-bellied, Vighna-Vinaayak or the one who destroys all hurdles and misfortunes, Sri Varadmuti or the one who is an embodiment of blessings and grants whatever boons one desires, and Shiva-sut or the son of Lord Shiva (refer verse no. 15).

The Lord derives his name Gajaanana or Gajpati or Gajamukh from the root word 'Gaj' meaning an elephant, and 'Ja' meaning an origin or birth. Hence, these names indicate that the Lord has taken birth in a form that has the head and body like that of an elephant. The elephant head stands for the macrocosm, while the rest of the body which resembles that of a human stands for the microcosm. These two aspects of this creation are not separate from one another but form a composite unit just like the head and the body of Lord Ganesh are not separate from one another but form one composite body of the Lord, though the head represents an animal (an elephant) and the rest of the body represents a human being.

In other words, one is regarded as learned, wise and enlightened only if he is able to see the Supreme Being even in the oddest and the most unconventional form of life in this creation. One must see the Lord in a healthy man as much as in a deformed and a handicapped individual; one must see the Lord in an animal as much as in a human form.

Another connotation is the following—the word 'ga' implies 'gati' or fate and destination of creation, and 'ja' means birth or origin. Hence, the word 'Gajpati' means the Lord from whom the rest of the creation has taken birth, and in whom the creation would finally collapse and merge at the end.

He is said to be the wisest and most honoured of the Hindu Gods and is always worshipped in the beginning of any endeavour or enterprise, whether it pertains to the mundane worldly affairs or to the spiritual realm. This is done to invoke his blessings which preempt any evil forces from throwing a spanner in the wheel of the successful completion of the exercise.

In Goswami Tulsidas' epic *Ram Charit Manas*, Sita has prayed to Lord Ganesh and addressed him with the titles of 'Gan-naayak', and 'Var-daayak'. [Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 257.] Now, let us examine the meaning of these two titles.

The word "Gan-Naayak" literally means 'the chief of the attendants', the 'commander', 'the god in charge of other junior gods'. Being the son of Lord Shiva, the obvious meaning is that Ganesh is the chief or the commander of all of Shiva's attendants. But this title of being a 'Gan-naayak' has a greater significance and far-reaching importance than this shallow meaning of just being the chief of Shiva's household attendants when we couple it with the other title of being a 'Var-daayak', one who graciously grants boons. It is as follows:—

He has an unchallenged and immaculate reputation as the God who fulfills any desire the worshipper has when he offers his worship to him. He is universally adored and offered worship on a priority basis before one offers worship to any other god because not only is he the greatest in the pantheon of gods but also because once he is pleased with the worshipper then all other gods are easy to please; none of them would ever think of denying what the worshipper wishes if Lord Ganesh has agreed to fulfill his wishes.

This fact is metaphorically depicted in his being appointed as the ‘chief of the attendants of Lord Shiva’. Lord Shiva the greatest of the three senior-most gods, i.e. the three gods of the holy Trinity consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva or Rudra the concluder. It is this reason why Shiva is honoured by the title of a ‘Maha-Deva’, the Great God. All other gods are his juniors, i.e. they attend to the wishes of Lord Shiva. Therefore, Ganesh’s anointment as the chief of Shiva’s attendants is a symbolic way of making him the ‘chief of all the gods who are junior to Lord Shiva’.

The two wives of Lord Ganapati are said to be Buddhi and Shiddhi who are personifications of the virtues of intellect and the glories that come with achievements.

One of the sub-Purans or Up-purans, known as ‘Mudgal-puran’ which is named after sage Mudgal is dedicated chiefly to the narration of the nine main incarnations of Lord Ganapati, or Lord Ganesh who is the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati, and is the chief deity who is worshipped first during any religious ceremony or auspicious activity. This Up-puran was probably written between 900-1100 A.D. The nine incarnations of Ganapati mentioned in this sub-Puran are the following—Vakradanta, Ekdanta, Mahodar, Gajaanana, Lambodar, Vikat, Vighna-raaja, Dhumra-varna, and Yoga. Besides these nine incarnations, it also lists 23 more forms of Lord Ganesh.

He is said to be the wisest and most honoured of the Hindu Gods and is always worshipped in the beginning of any endeavour or enterprise, whether it pertains to the mundane worldly affairs or to the spiritual realm. This is done to invoke his blessings which preempt any evil forces from throwing a spanner in the wheel of the successful completion of the exercise.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, verse no. 15, describes the Mantra of Lord Ganesh which highlights his exalted nature and superior stature amongst all the gods, while Canto 4, paragraph no. 12 describes its importance for the worshipper.

The Mantra is “Ganaanam Twa Ganpatim Havaamahe Kavim Kavinaamupasra-vastabham; Jyestha Rajam Brahanam Brahamnaspata Aa Naha Srinva-nnutubhiha Seed Saadanam”. [Briefly it means—‘I pay my obeisance and respect to Lord Ganesh who is the most senior amongst all the attendants of the Lord and even the Gods. He is most exalted, wise and learned. He is like the biggest king or emperor amongst those who are enlightened about Brahm, and is Brahm himself personified. There is no one better or senior than you. Be gracious upon me; be pleased with me. I bow before you most humbly and submit myself before you.’]

When this hymn is being said, the worshipper should prefix and suffix it with the Beej Mantra of Ganesh, which is the Sanskrit letter ‘Ga’ (as in gum) with a Bindu (dot) on top, and pronounced as ‘Gam/Gan(g)’ (pronounced as *gum* or *gun(g)*).]

The *Tarak Mantra* of Lord Ganapati is ‘OM Gum/gun(g)’ according to the *Ganapati Upanishad*, verse no. 8.

Now let us understand the symbolism of the various parts of this God. His *large ears* imply that the Lord hears everything, from every corner, and from everyone; the Lord is extremely receptive and gathers information and knowledge from all available sources. He is a good listener, a virtue that makes him a good teacher, because one has to learn first and it is only then that he can teach others. The large size of the ear that resemble a winnow-basket or a hand-held fan indicate that

the Lord is able to blow away useless pieces of information and accept only the useful ones like the case of the winnowing basket or the hand-fan that is used to blow away chaff and retain the grain.

His *large head* stands for great intellect and mind.

He has *two tusks*—one that is full stands for the Truth that is perfect, complete, priceless and beautiful. The other tusk that is broken indicates an imperfect world that is incomplete, worthless, and not as good as it seems to be. Since the two tusks are part of Lord Ganesh's body, the implication is that both the Absolute Truth as well as the not-so-absolute truth is a part of the universal whole known as Brahm. In other words, the perfect world of spiritual truth represented by the full tusk, and the imperfect world of material sense objects represented by the broken tusk are part of the same universal Truth known as Brahm. The fact that the intellect helps one to discriminate between the right and the wrong only when there is a choice is indicated by the two tusks—one that is full indicates the correct and the straight path, and the one that is broken implies the crooked and the wrong path.

The *bent and long trunk* has the following connotations—(i) it stands for OM, the cosmic sound that reverberates ('trumpets') in the ether that fills the space of the sky where the entire creation is harboured; (ii) since the trunk emerges from the head of the elephant and it can uproot big trees and clear the path ahead for the elephant, the implied meaning is that the Lord employs his mind and intellect to get rid of the greatest of delusions and ignorance and other spiritual obstacles or hurdles, no matter how crooked they may be, that come in the way of seekers of Truth.

His *wide mouth* indicates a good appetite, and this stands for his ability to accept a wide range of knowledge. It also means that the Lord can speak on a wide range of topics with the greatest of ease and with the highest level of erudition and expertise at oratory.

His *big belly* stands for his endless appetite for knowledge and wisdom which he assimilates with ease. Being a personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, it also means that the Lord harbours the entire creation inside his own self. His big belly stands for the immense size of the universe.

Ganesh has *four arms* indicating the four components of the Anthakaran, called the inner-self. These are Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankaar (ego, false pride etc.)

One of his hands holds a *Paasha (snare; rope)* which stands for worldly attachments and entanglements that the Lord is able to control. The second hand holds an *Ankush (goad)* which stands for the ability to exercise control over the sense organs and natural urges. The third hand holds a *Modak* (a ball of sweetmeat) which stands for the spiritual rewards. And the fourth hand is held in the *Var Mudra* which is used to bless his devotees and give them fearlessness.

His mount is a *small mouse*. The mouse is notorious for stealing grain and ruining the store. Hence it is a metaphor for all the evil and negative qualities in a creature that are demeaning for his soul and lead to his ruin, and the fact that the Lord sits on the mouse shows that the Lord helps one to overcome them; or the fact that the Lord is able to overcome and subdue all the negativities of creation. The 'small' size of the mouse indicates that even a small negative trait in us can rob us of all the other good we have like the small rat can ruin the greatest of harvest or a huge granary.

The mouse is fond of sweets and grains. This indicates that the Lord is fond of good virtues and qualities of creation, and he searches them out from all the corners of creation like the mouse that goes on rummaging for grain and sweetmeats throughout his life.

The *Ganapati Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, which is the twenty-fifth Upanishad of this Veda, is entirely dedicated to him. It is propounded therein that Lord Ganapati resides in the inner-self of all living beings as their Atma, the soul and the pure consciousness. It then goes on to explain the meaning of the word Ganapati, how to meditate upon the Lord, the Mala-Mantras dedicated to him which

are used to turn the beads of the rosary while doing Japa (repetition of the holy Mantras), the spiritual rewards of such meditation and contemplation, some special Mantras of the Lord which helps the worshipper fulfill his desires and attain fruits of his efforts, the benefits of reading this eclectic Upanishad, and the rules to be followed while doing so as well as for preaching this Upanishad to others. The visible form of Lord Ganpati has also been described in this Upanishad (verse no. 11-14).

The *image of Lord Ganapati* is described in verse nos. 11-12 of the Ganapati Upanishad as follows—

“verse no. 11 = The Lord (Ganapati) has one tusk and four arms. He holds a ‘Paash’ (a snare) and an ‘Ankush’ (a goad) in two of his arms, while the third is held in the ‘Abhaya Mudra’ (the posture that grants perpetual fearlessness to his devotees) and the fourth in the ‘Var Mudra’ (the posture that grants boon of wish fulfillment to his devotees). He holds a flag with the insignia of a rat/mouse (11).

“verse no. 12 = His countenance is red like blood. His abdomen is large (big and pot-bellied). His ears are also large like the hand-held winnowing fan. He is covered in clothes of red colour.

His body is covered by a paste of red-coloured perfume. He is duly worshipped with red coloured flowers (12).”]

Prayer offered to the Sun God

(2)

दीन-दयालु दिवाकर देवा । कर मुनि, मनुज, सुरासुर सेवा ॥ 1 ॥
हिम-तम-करि-केहरि करमाली । दहन दोष-दुख-दुरित-रुजाली ॥ 2 ॥
कोक-कोकनद-लोक-प्रकासी । तेज-प्रताप-रूप-रस-रासी ॥ 3 ॥
सारथि पंगु, दिव्य रथ-गामी । हरि-संकर-विधि-मूरति स्वामी ॥ 4 ॥
बेद-पुरान प्रगट जस जागै । तुलसी राम-भगति बर माँगै ॥ 5 ॥

(2)

dīna-dayālu divākara dēvā. kara muni, manuja, surāsura sēvā. 1.
hima-tama-kari-kēhari karamālī. dahana dōṣa-dukha-durita-rujālī. 2.
kōka-kōkanada-lōka-prakāsī. tēja-pratāpa-rūpa-rasa-rāsī. 3.
sārathi paṅgu, dibya ratha-gāmī. hari-saṅkara-vidhi-mūrati svāmī. 4.
bēda-purāna pragaṭa jasa jāgai. tulasī rāma-bhagati bara māṁgai. 5.

Verse no. 2—Oh Lord Sun, who is merciful towards the distressed! Sages and hermits, men of all denominations, the Gods and the demons—all serve (i.e. worship, honour and show respect to) you. (1).

For the purpose of eliminating (overcoming, subduing, vanquishing, conquering) frost and darkness which are like strong elephants, you are like a lion, the king of the forest, who is easily able to subdue the mightiest of elephants. You wear a garland of rays around you. [This refers to the brilliant halo that surrounds the Sun. It represents an aura of divinity and holiness that surrounds you from all sides.]

You turn to ashes (i.e. burn and eliminate) faults, shortcomings, defects, flaws, grief, sorrows, unrighteousness, misdemeanors, and diseases (that would thrive on this earth if there was no sunlight and its heat). (2).

You provide an extreme sense of joy and happiness to the Chakva (an ostrich) and Chakvi (its female companion) when they are united during the day after being separated overnight. You make the lotus bloom. [That is, you bless the world with light symbolizing auspiciousness and good tidings.]

You light up the entire world. You are a treasury of immense splendour, radiance, brilliance, glory, beauty and the nectar or essence of life. (3).

You ride a magnificent and glorious chariot. Your charioteer (named Arun) is a lame. Oh Lord! You are an image (or another manifestation; a personified form) of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the concluder). (4).

Your grand fame and stupendous glories are sparkling with a brilliant dazzle in the Vedas and the Purans. Tulsidas asks you for a boon of devotion for Lord Ram. (5).

[Note—(a) The Sun God or Surya—References of the Upanishads dealing with the Sun God—

(i) Rig Veda = Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

(ii) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Savitri Upanishad.

(iii) Shukla Yajur Veda = and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15.

(iv) Krishna Yajur Veda = Akchu Upanishad, Cantos 1 and 2; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1; Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2; Naryan Upanishad, verse no. 1.

(v) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-8; Surya Upanishad; Gayatri Upanishad; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 8, 21, 24, 28, and Uttar Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 6, 15-16 (stresses that the Sun is a metaphor for the Atma and Brahm); Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse/paragraph no. 13 (which says that the Sun is a revelation of the Parmatma or Brahm; or it is symbol of the union of the Jivatma and the Parmatma); and Canto 4, verse/paragraph no. 11 (which highlights the importance of the worship of the Sun God); Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 6, verse no. 12; Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 4 (Brahm as splendid as the Sun).

The Sanskrit word for the Sun God or Aditya is *Surya*. This word has three connotations—viz. (i) Sarat(ha)—one who moves like the wind or the cloud. This refers to the Sun because it moves constantly across the sky. It also refers to the supreme cosmic Consciousness that makes all movement possible. (ii) Svikriti(ha)—this means one who receives and accepts. This virtue refers to the fact that all offerings offered to the fire sacrifice are done in the presence of the Sun, and since the latter is the celestial cauldron of fire all the offerings are deemed to be offered to it. In another plane, it refers to the Jiva, the living being, who receives stimuli from the world and then accepts them and deduces that the world from where they originate is real and true. (iii) Subhrate and Savita—meaning one who shines brilliantly. This is very obvious in the case of the Sun. This virtue refers to the supreme Self or supreme Consciousness that is self-illuminated and self-effulgent.

Sun God or Surya appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the 'eye' of the Viraat Purush, and at the time of creation when this Viraat Purush revealed himself as the

individual creature such as for example a cow, a horse and a man, the Sun God took up residence in the eye (refer Aitereyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4). He is also regarded as visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9). The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). The Sun is like the Atma of all the creatures (Akchu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

The Sun is the brightest, the most splendorous, the brilliantly radiant, the most majestic and grandest entity in the entire firmament. The whole length and breadth of the sky is lit with its light; all the objects present in the sky, visible or invisible, are illuminated by its light. It is the eternal and infinite celestial source of light, heat and energy; it inspires, fosters, sustains and protects life in this world; it is synonymous with and a metaphor for life in all its dimensions. Its splendour and radiance makes it an apt metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment. As an embodiment of this virtue of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity he has been held in high esteem and as the great teacher and preacher of eclectic knowledge pertaining to the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. He had assumed the form of a horse and revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda to the great sage Yagyavalkya. He was also the teacher of Hanuman, said to be incarnate Wind God and Lord Shiva, and who was the great, most ardent and the wisest devotee of Lord Ram.

From the physical perspective also, the Sun is regarded as a fount of light, energy and heat which supports life in all forms in this physical world. No life is imaginable without the presence of the Sun.

According to mythological accounts, the Sun God was the son of sage Kashyap and his wife Aditi from whom all the Gods were born. He is said to be a revelation from the eye of the Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu who is the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing vast and invisible form of the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm. The physical Sun in the sky is the Viraat Purush's visible form. He was married to Sangya, the daughter of Vishwakarma who is regarded as the architect, builder and planner of the Gods. Sangya had two sons and one daughter from the Sun God—viz. the sons named Shraadhya-dev also called Vaivaswat Manu and Yam the god of death, and the daughter named Yamuna which is also the name of a famous river in India. Sangya could not bear the intensity of the Sun's heat and light, so she left her 'shadow' or image and herself went away disguised as a mare to do severe penance. From this 'shadow' were produced two sons and a daughter. The two sons were Shani God who is believed to be full of malice and evil forebodings reflecting the genes of his mother as a dark shadow, and Saarvarni Manu, and the daughter was Tapti literally meaning one who is fierce and hot. In due course of time, the Sun God found out that his real wife Sangya was involved in doing severe Tapa, so he was extremely pleased with her and brought her back. It was from her form as a mare that the Ashwini Kumars were born. They derived their name from the root 'Ashwa' meaning a horse. These twin sons of the Sun God are regarded as the medicine men of the Gods.

The Sun is the source of light, heat and energy for this earth. The Sun regulates seasons and rains, it controls the cycle of day and night, thereby regulating all aspects of life on earth. It is a symbolic personified and visible form of Brahm, the sublime form of the Supreme Being also known as the Viraat Purush, the vast and infinite macrocosmic form of Brahm. No life is imaginable without the Sun. Therefore, it is Pran personified. The Moon is lighted because of the Sun; the Moon has no light of its own but shines due the light of the Sun falling upon it. Therefore, the Moon showcases the magical power of the Sun to light up even distant bodies which have no light of their own. In other words, this Pran element represented by the Sun is capable of injecting life in an entity which has no life of its own, here the instance of the Moon. Since the Moon is lighted due to the inspiration provided by the Sun, it is like the Rayi. The Sun is the inspirer, and the Moon is the inspired one.

The Sun is an excellent example of the gross and the subtle aspects of Brahm. The eternal fire that is burning inside the disc of the Sun is the subtle aspect of Brahm; it provides the power and energy to the Sun to shine and burn. This fire is the 'inspirer' of the gross aspect of Brahm. The disc of the Sun is the 'inspired'—the heat, light and energy that the physical body of the Sun gives is due to the fire burning inside it, but no one can see this fire. The viewer sees the disc of the luminous Sun only which is the inspired aspect of the Sun. The hidden fire in the Sun is the Pran of the Sun because it lends the latter its worth and power to shine. This 'Pran' of the Sun, i.e. the fire burning inside the Sun is Brahm manifested in its subtle form. The visible disc of the Sun, with its dazzling brilliance and splendour, giving out heat, light and energy is the manifested aspect of Pran or Brahm; it is the gross body of Pran or Brahm. Hence, it is the Rayi of the Sun.

But the fire burning inside the Sun is not the complete picture of Brahm which is a transcendental entity that surpasses all definitions. At the most, the fire represents only one of the numerous virtues of Brahm. Therefore, to say that the hidden fire inside the Sun is Brahm personified in a subtle form is only a 'part or fraction' of the entire truth. In fact, the fire is a 'subtle image' of Brahm just like the external luminous disc of the Sun is the 'gross image' of Brahm. The fire embodies some of the grand virtues and characteristics of Brahm. The fire is the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm, and hence it is the 'Rayi' of Brahm because it is inspired by Brahm to burn and give out light and heat. In the context of the Sun, this fire becomes the 'inspirer' and the Sun becomes the 'inspired'. The Sun being a visible manifestation of the stupendous glories of Brahm is therefore the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm. The 'inspirer' Brahm is invisible. So when one worships the Sun as a manifestation of Brahm, he does so both in its subtle ('Amurta') and gross ('Murta') forms as mentioned in this verse. When the gross is worshipped, the subtle is automatically deemed to be worshipped. They both represent the 'inspired' aspect of the sublime Brahm that transcends both the gross and the subtle. Brahm is the universal 'inspirer' of both.

The Sun is at the core of life on earth; it helps in producing food crops of all varieties such as cereals, pulses, vegetables etc. that are eaten by the living being to survive and gain energy and strength. Without the light, energy and heat of the Sun there would be no vegetation on earth. Hence, the Sun is the 'inspirer' and the 'food' that is produced by the grace of the Sun is the inspired. When the food is eaten it gives the creature energy, strength and vitality. Therefore, that secret and invisible aspect of food that is used by the creature to derive energy, strength and vitality is the Pran of the food, while its external form, its external body is the gross aspect of this Pran. When this food is eaten and digested by the eater, the Pran is transferred to the eater in the form of the latter's own Pran, and the strength, energetic activity and vitality that the body of the eater shows is the inspired aspect of this Pran. The food therefore is the Pran, and the eater is the Rayi.

All the units of Nature that depend upon some Principal, such as the Moon depending for its light on the Sun, are called Rayi. These units may be visible (having a gross form) or invisible (having a subtle form).

In mythology, the Sun God revealed himself as Sugriv, the king of the monkey race, during Treta-Yug when Lord Ram incarnated, and as Karna during Dwapar when Lord Krishna came as an incarnation of Vishnu. Sun God rides a chariot driven by Arun who is the son of Vintaa (his mother) and the elder brother of Garud, the legendary heron or eagle who is the mount of Lord Vishnu. The seven horses of the chariot represent the seven colours of the Sun's light. He is constantly on the move and controls and regulates the seasons, months, solstice and year.

The Surya Mandal, i.e. the divine abode of the Sun God, has been narrated in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 10, verse nos. 1-23. It is also referred to in the Tripadvibhuti Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 as falling in the path of a spiritual aspirant who, upon leaving his gross body, is going astride the

Garud (the divine vehicle of Vishnu which is represented by the OM Mantra here) through the path of the sky to the heaven where Lord Vishnu lives.

Atharva Veda's *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 28 describes why Aditya or the Sun God is worshipped by wise men. "Aditya (the Sun) illuminates the world (i.e. it provides the world its light, life, energy, heat and dynamism). This is why Aditya is worshipped and honoured by wise and erudite persons who seek purity and knowledge.

[The Sun gives 'light' and removes 'darkness'. In other words, it grants knowledge and wisdom by removing the darkness of delusions and ignorance. Since the celestial Sun is employed as a metaphor for Brahm and the Atma, it follows that one meditates and contemplates upon the latter two entities to attain true spiritual knowledge and enlightenment that would remove one's darkness caused by worldly delusions, and which is the cause of all his fears and perplexities.] (28)."

According to Yoga Upanishads, the Sun God has his symbolic presence in the naval of the body in the Nabhi Chakra or the Manipur Chakra, and as the fire element in the Mooladhar Chakra, the Swadhisthan Chakra and the Kundalini. The dynamic energy of the sun represented by its life-giving powers is revealed in the form of consciousness that flows in the Pingla Naadi, the nerve passing through the right nostril.

The *Akchu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition lists some of the virtues of the Sun God in its Canto 1, verse no. 1 which is exclusively dedicated to his grand virtues as follows—he provides the creature with the ability to see; he lights up the world for him; he provides the creation with its life and sustains it; he moves across the sky with his army of light rays to protect the world from darkness; he personifies the three basic Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama much like Brahm; he takes the creature away from darkness representing delusions and ignorance towards light symbolising wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment; he is like the Swan—pure and immaculate; he is the bearer of life; he is the Jatveda (one having whatever is born or created as his property; the all-possessor; one who knows everything and is known by all creation; the word is usually applied as an epithet for the eternal fire element of which the sun is a visible manifestation and container); he is as intrinsically valuable as molten and purified gold; he is Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance for a noble cause) personified; he is the emperor of creation and is crowned with a glittering crown and wears an equally glittering robe consisting of rays of the sunlight; he is the son of Aditi, the mother of Gods, and he lives as 'sight' in our eyes.

Aditya or the Sun God, or his visible form as the celestial Sun, has been repeatedly regarded by the Upanishads as a visible *manifestation of the Viraat Purush* who himself is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. For example, Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad—1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15; Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is the *eye* of the Supreme Being—refer Aiteriyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and finds his abode in the creature's eye—refer Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

The *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6, 8 describes the Sun God as the *Pran*—the vital life giving factor in creation, the life consciousness, and in Canto 1, verse nos. 9, 12-15 as Prajapati—the creator, motivator, nourisher, sustainer, protector and caretaker of the subjects of this creation. He is called the Fire God or the Vaishwanar Agni, the Viraat Purush, the Pran or life consciousness that supports all life in this world—Canto 1, verse no. 7.

The *Akchu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is fully dedicated to the Sun God. It has two parts—in its Canto 1 sage Sankriti offers prayers to the Sun God, and Canto 2 contains the metaphysical and spiritual teachings of the Sun God for the benefit of the sage.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1, says that the Sun God is known as ‘Mitra’, literally meaning a friend. This is because the Sun God’s benevolence and life-sustaining abilities make him a fast friend of every single living being in creation. He fosters life and is a friend of life rather than being its enemy by annihilating it. He helps the world to develop and grow as well as to acquire its stupendous magnificence and glory—refer *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is also known as ‘Savita’—refer *Savitru-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, and *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, Canto 2 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

The *Narayan Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in *Brahmo-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/27 says that Surya or the Sun God is a manifestation of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified.

The Sun God is one of the ten Lokpals or custodians of the world because all forms of life on earth revolve around the benevolence of the Sun.

‘Aditya’ or the Sun God appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda--1/41/4-6; 2/27; 8/47/14-18; 10/185; Sam Veda—395; 397; Yajur Veda—23/5; 34/54; Atharva Veda—5/3/9-10; 16/3.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse/paragraph no. 11 describes the great Mantra of the Sun God. To quote—

“[This paragraph is dedicated to the Sun as a visible manifestation of the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being which have revealed themselves as the divine Goddess. Just like the Goddess which has astounding powers which are benign when favourable but destructive when malignant, the Sun too plays a life infusing and sustaining role in its benign form, but scorches everything to ruin when it gets unfavourable. This is proved by the fact that the same Sun which gives the much needed heat, light and energy to this creation, which produces and regulates the seasons, the rainfall, and the cycle of day and night, also produces droughts and famines, and sucks out life from this world by its relentless heat and sunshine. It has been said elsewhere in the Upanishads that the Sun is visible manifestation of the supreme Brahm. The Sun is also regarded as a personified form of the Fire God as well as the ‘eye’ of the Supreme Being.]

The three letters A, U and M combine together to form the word OM. [This word OM refers to Brahm.]

The ‘Hans’ (i.e. Brahm) that is virtuous, pure, holy and divine resides in the infinite sky. The ‘Hota’ (the priest who offers oblations to the sacred fire during the sacrifice) offers sacrifices to this Hans on the altar.

[This refers to the offering of oblations to the sacred fire that is meant to be accepted by the Supreme Being.]

This sacred fire is like an honoured guest, and lives in one’s own household. [This statement has another connotation. It refers to the fact that the Fire God, in his elementary form as the fire element that provides energy, heat, warmth and light, resides in the creature’s body in a subtle form. This Fire God would then be

synonymous with the ‘consciousness’ living in the creature’s body because the body is kept alive and energized by this conscious factor.]

Similarly, the seasons also live amongst the men and have their symbolic place in the sacrificial altar. They have been created from a combination of such factors of Nature as water, rays of the sun, truthfulness and mountains.

A wise man who offers worship to the Sun God—who is a fount of brilliance, radiance, splendour and light, who brings dusk in its wake (i.e. where there is no Sun there is darkness), and who symbolizes the stupendous potentials of Pragya (true and deep knowledge; the virtues of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, enlightenment, expertise)—is able to attain all the eclectic fruits or the best of rewards that one can expect in this world by doing auspicious deeds. This fact is evident in each word of the Mantra dedicated to the Sun God. [The Mantra is not mentioned here, but it is the Gayatri Mantra explained at length in Canto 1 of this Upanishad.]

The ‘Adrija’ is the divine Goddess who epitomizes the glorious virtues of Brahm in their dynamic manifestation. [The word ‘Adrija’ has two parts—‘Adri’ means a Mountain and ‘Aja’ means a daughter. Hence, the word refers to the ‘daughter of the sacred Mountain’. This is a reference to Goddess Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, who is the daughter of the King of the Mountains.]

She lives in the sky high above. [This refers to the Sun which epitomizes the dynamic energy and potentials of the Supreme Being in its most brilliant, powerful and evident form.] [11].”

The *Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 4 asserts that the supreme Brahm is comparable to the celestial Sun or Aditya in its splendour and visible glory. To quote—“I (the spiritual aspirant) know (am acquainted with) this great Purush (the divine Being, the divine Brahm, the Supreme Being) who is as splendid and radiant as the celestial Sun (‘Aditya’), and who is beyond the reach of darkness (‘Tama’). [The word ‘Tama’ means darkness and it implies a preponderance of the negative virtues of Avidya or ignorance and lack of true knowledge (refer last stanza of paragraph no. 5), and ‘Maya’ means delusions along with all its accompanying spiritual problems. The ‘Aditya’ or the Sun is the only self-illuminated celestial body in the sky, and all the planets are lighted by it. This metaphor of the Sun in relation to Brahm is most apt because it is Brahm that is at the core of life in this creation. Brahm is pure cosmic Consciousness. It is the Consciousness that injects ‘life and vitality’ into the otherwise lifeless and inane creation; it is the Consciousness that ‘illuminates’ this world for the creature in as much as it enables the creature’s body to perceive the external world through his sense organs of perception just like the celestial Sun lights up the world for him to see with its physical light. The whole creation revolves round this Consciousness just like the planets go around the Sun. The Sun is the sustainer and protector of life on our planet, and hence to liken it with the supreme sustainer and protector known as Brahm is also very appropriate for purposes of understanding. Again, the Sun is the most evident source of light in the world and it removes the latter’s darkness by its own illumination which also is another reason for its selection to represent Brahm.]”

The *Surya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 3 asserts that all forms of life on earth depend upon the Sun God. The Sun is the harbinger as well as the sustainer, protector and nourisher of life in the world.

To quote—“The Sun God is the Atma (the soul, the essence and the basic life infusing, life supporting and life protecting element) of this creation. [That is, without the Sun no life in any form is imaginable or viable in this world.] It is the Sun that is the cause of all life forms coming into being in this world—i.e. it is the Sun God who is the progenitor of all living beings in this world because it is the Sun that provides the world with its energy, heat, light to sustain life in it; it is the Sun God who is the harbinger of life on earth; it is the Sun God from whom all the life forms are born.

It is from the Sun that the Yagya (fire sacrifices), the Parjanya (the life-giving rain), the Anna (food; crops) and the Atma (consciousness; life and its vital signs) have come into existence. And it is the Sun that sustains and protects them all (3).”

According to the Atharva Veda’s *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 24, the symbolic Sun that resides in the subtle heart of the creature has ninety-six rays radiating out from it. These rays stand for the ninety-six Tattwas (elements) of creation as referred to separately in Canto 1, verse nos. 14-15.

(b) The *twelve Adityas*—According to mythology, there are said to be *twelve Adityas* which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/34 says that the Adityas are none but manifestations of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

According to *Brihad Aranakya Upanishad* 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyawalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man.

Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation.

According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata (pronounced as ‘Dhaataa’), Aryama (pronounced as ‘Aryamaa’ as calf), Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vishawan (pronounced as ‘Vivaswaan’), Pusha (pronounced as ‘Pushaa’), Parjanya, Twashta (pronounced as ‘Twashtaa’), and Vishnu.

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as *Dhata* during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as *Aryama* during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as *Mitra* during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as *Varun* during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as *Indra* during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as *Vivaswan* during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as *Pusha* during the seventh Hindu month of

Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as *Kratu* during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as *Anshu* during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as *Bhag* during the tenth Hindu month of Paush also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as *Twasta* during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as *Vishnu* during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

Since the Sun God is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Viraat Purush, he is like an Emperor who, during his sojourn across the sky which is like his vast realm, is accompanied by many sages called Rishis, celestial courtesans called Apsaras, celestial musicians called Gandharvas, servants called Raak-chhas or demons, guards known as Bhalls, and serpents called Naags. The Rishis walk in the front singing the Lord's glories in sacred hymns; the Apsaras dance to the music scores by Gandharvas; the Raak-chhas (demons) push the chariot from rear; the Bhalls take care of the chariot and guide it along, while the Naags pull it forward.

These attendants are also different like the forms in which the Sun God is worshipped in different months as described above. The list is outlined month-wise in the following sequence—Rishi, Apsara, Gandharva, Raksha, Bhalla and Naag.

(1) The month of Chaitra—Rishi is Pulastya; Apsara is Kritsthal; Gandharva is Tumburu; Raak-chhas is Heti; Bhalla is Rath-krit; and Naag is Vaasuki.

(2) The month of Vaishaakha—Rishi is Pulaha; Apsara is Punjikasthal; Gandharva is Naarad; Raak-chhas is Praheti; Bhalla is Oja ('Ojaha'); and Naag is Kachaneer.

(3) The month of Jyestha—Rishi is Atri; Apsara is Menakaa; Gandharva is Hahaa; Raak-chhas is Paurusheya; Bhalla is Rathaswan; and Naag is Takshak.

(4) The month of Ashadha—Rishi is Vashishta; Apsara is Rambhaa; Gandharva is Huhu; Raak-chhas is Shukra; Bhalla is Chitraswan; and Naag is Sahajanya.

(5) The month of Sraavan—Rishi is Angira; Apsara is Pramlochaa; Gandharva is Vishwaa-vasu; Raak-chhas is Varya; Bhalla is Srotaa; and Naag is Elaapatra.

(6) The month of Bhadrappaad—Rishi is Bhrigu; Apsara is Anumlochaa; Gandharva is Ugrasen; Raak-chhas is Vyagrha; Bhalla is Aasaaran; and Naag is Shankha-paal.

(7) The month of Ashwin—Rishi is Gautam; Apsara is Ghrithaachi; Gandharva is Dhananjay; Raak-chhas is Vaat; Bhalla is Suruchi; and Naag is Sushen.

(8) The month of Kaartik—Rishi is Bhardwaj; Apsara is Varchaa; Gandharva is Parjanya; Raak-chhas is Senjit; Bhalla is Vishwa; and Naag is Eieraawat/Earaawat.

(9) The month of Maargashirsha—Rishi is Kashyap; Apsara is Urvashi; Gandharva is Ritsen; Raak-chhas is Vidy-chhatru; Bhalla is Taakcharya; and Naag is Mahaa-shankha.

(10) The month of Paush—Rishi is Aayu; Apsara is Purvachitti; Gandharva is Sfurja; Raak-chhas is Arishta-nemi; Bhalla is Uurna/Oorna; and Naag is Karkotak.

(11) The month of Maagh—Rishi is Jamdagni also known as Richik-tanaya; Apsara is Tilottamaa; Gandharva is Shatjit; Raak-chhas is Brahmapet; Bhalla is Dhrit-raashtra; and Naag is Kambal.

(12) The month of Phaalgun—Rishi is Vishwaa-mitra/Vishwamitra; Apsara is Rambhaa; Gandharva is Suryavarchaa; Raak-chhas is Makhaapet; Bhalla is Satyajit; and Naag is Aswatar.

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Adityas, along with the Vasus and Rudras etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh

was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

The *Devi Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 4 says that the Adityas or the various forms of the Sun God are manifestations of the Mother Goddess, who actually represents the dynamism of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess is the energy, authority and powers of Brahm that are employed by the latter to create and control this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. The Aditya or the Sun God is this dynamism of Brahm revealed at the macrocosmic level.

The divine glories of Aditya (Sun God) have been narrated in the *Surya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 4-5 as follows—

“Verse no. 4 = I bow most reverentially before Lord Aditya (the Sun God). You are evidently the one who inspires all activities and the deeds done by all living beings. You are the visible manifestation of the Trinity Gods such as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector, and Rudra the concluder of creation. You are a personified form of the four Vedas, viz. the Rig, the Yajur, the Sam and the Atharva. Therefore, you are an evident revelation of the Chandas (because the Vedas are composed in Chandas which are special poetical styles in which their hymns are composed) (4).

“Verse no. 5 = It is from Aditya (the Sun God) that the primary elements of creation such as wind or air, earth, water and fire as well as light were born or created. The sky and directions also have their origin in Aditya. [These primary elements of creation owe their existence to the Sun.]

It is from Aditya that the Gods and the Vedas have emerged.

It is Aditya that heats up the universe in the sense that the former keeps the latter warm and provides it with its energy, vitality, strength and dynamism.

It is Aditya that is manifested in the form of the four aspects of the Anthakaran (the subtle aspects of the inner-self)—i.e. the Mana (subtle mind and subtle heart), Buddhi or intellect, Chitta or the mind and the sub-conscious, and Ahankar or pride and ego.

It is Aditya that is present in the form of the four vital winds called Pran that sustain and foster life in all living beings in this creation—viz. the Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana, and Vyan.

It is Aditya (i.e. the dynamic but subtle life-infusing energy) that keeps the five organs of perception in the body active and alive. These organs are ears (that hear), skin (that feels), eyes (that see), tongue (that tastes and speaks), and nose (that smells and breathes).

It is Aditya that has revealed itself in the form of the five Tanmatras of the five organs of perception, or the active functions carried out by these five sense organs of perception—such as speech or voice (which relates to the ears because it is the ear that hears the word that is being spoken), touch and feeling (which relates to the skin), form, colour and shape (which relates to the eyes), taste (which relates to the tongue), and smell (which relates to the nose).

It is Aditya that has revealed itself in the form of the five Tanmatras of the five organs of action, or the active functions carried out by these five sense organs of action—such as the function of speech or voice which relates to the mouth (because it is the mouth through which a creature speaks), the function of taking, receiving or accepting anything which relates to the hands (because it is the hand by which a creature takes or receives or accepts anything), the function of going somewhere or the function of mobility which relates to the legs (because it is the leg which helps a creature to move and go to the desired destination), the function of excretion or elimination of waste from the body which relate to the excretory organs (because it is the anus and urinary organs which help a creature to remove waste products from the body), and the function of deriving pleasure which relates to the genital organ

(because it is through this organ that a creature enjoys the immense pleasure that accompanies sex).

It is Aditya that is an embodiment of the virtues of Anand (bliss and happiness), Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment), and Vigyan (analytical or higher level of Gyan) (5).”

The Sun is said to have *twelve Kalaas* (shapes, forms, dimensions or aspects) and the Sun with each Kalaa would therefore be known by that name. They are called ‘Dwaadash Aditya’, meaning the twelve forms in which the Sun God is known. They are the following—Tapini, Taapini, Dhumraa, Jwaalini, Ruchi, Shushumna, Bhogadaa, Vishwaa, Bodhini, Dhaarini and Kshamaa.

That is why lord Ram was said to belong to the solar race because he had twelve Kalaas possessed by the Sun. There is an obvious parallel here.

(c) The *eight Adityas*—According to the Taittiriya Brahman, 1/1/9/1 gives the name of only eight Adityas—(i) Mitra, (ii) Varun (iii) Aryaman (iv) Ansha (v) Bhag (vi) Dhaata (vii) Indra, (viii) Vivaswan.]

Prayer offered to Lord Śiva

(3)

को जाँचिये संभु तजि आन ।
 दीनदयालु भगत—आरति—हर, सब प्रकार समरथ भगवान् ।।1।।
 कालकूट—जुर—जरत सुरासुर, निज पन लागि किये बिष—पान ।
 दारुन दनुज, जगत—दुखदायक, मारेउ त्रिपुर एक ही बान ।।2।।
 जो गति अगम महामुनि दुर्लभ, कहत संत, श्रुति, सकल पुरान ।
 सो गति मरन—काल अपने पुर, देत सदासिव सबहिं समान ।।3।।
 सेवत सुलभ, उदार कलपतरु, पारबती—पति परम सुजान ।
 देहु काम—रिपु राम—चरन—रति, तुलसिदास कहँ कृपानिधान ।।4।।

(3)

kō jāṁciyē sambhu taji āna.
 dīnadayālu bhagata-ārati-hara, saba prakāra samaratha bhagavāna. 1.
 kālakūṭa-jura-jarata surāsura, nija pana lāgi kiyē biṣa-pāna.
 dārūna danuja, jagata-dukhadāyaka, mārē'u tripura ēka hī bāna. 2.
 jō gati agama mahāmuni durlabha, kahata santa, śruti, sakala purāna.
 sō gati marana-kāla apanē pura, dēta sadāsiva sabahim samāna. 3.
 sēvata sulabha, udāra kalapataru, pārabatī-pati parama sujāna.
 dēhu kāmā-ripu rāma-carana-rati, tulasidāsa kaham' kṛpānidhāna. 4.

Verse no. 3—Whom else should one petition except Lord Sambhu (Shiva)¹? He is merciful and kind on the underdogs, the downtrodden, the unfortunate, the underprivileged, the deprived, the wretched and the distressed. He eliminates the numerous sufferings, the grief, the miseries, the troubles and the tribulations of his devotees. He

is a Lord God with all abilities, the Lord who is supremely competent, almighty and all-powerful. (1).

During the legendary churning of the ocean, when both the Gods and demons were being scorched by the heat of the hell-like poison² (which was the scum that formed a froth as the result of the vigorous churning of the highly toxic ocean), you had gulped it down voluntarily immediately to keep your vow (i.e. to uphold your promise and reputation) of protecting those creatures who are humble, distressed and unable to take care of themselves. When the ferocious demon Tripurasur³ began to greatly torment and tyrannize the world, you had slayed him with a single arrow. (2).

Oh immortal Shiva! When one dies at Varanasi (a holy pilgrim city in northern India), you bestow upon him the most exalted and supreme end (i.e. death which gives salvation and emancipation to the soul) which is considered by the Vedas, Purans and other learned sages as rare and difficult to attain even for saints, sages, hermits and other such people. (3).

Oh Lord (husband) of Parvati! Oh Sujan (one who is clever wise, intelligent, enlightened and learned)! You are easily accessible by service (i.e. by devotion and worship). You are as fulfilling and magnanimous as the Kalpa-tree (the all wish-fulfilling ever-green tree of the Gods), giving desired fruits as desired (by your devotees). You are an enemy of Kamdeo⁴ (the patron God of lust, cupid and passion). [That is, you vanquish inherent passions and worldly attractions that are an integral part of all creatures in this creation. You have astounding self-control.]

So, oh merciful Lord! Bless Tulsidas so that he has great devotion in the holy feet of Lord Ram. (4).

[Note—¹Lord Shiva: The Lord is also known as Rudra, the angry form of the concluder of evil aspects of creation.

The *Mantras of Lord Rudra*—References: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 16 (Mantra of Rudra); Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 30 (Mantra of Shiva). (ii) Atharva Veda = Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 1-6 (Mantra of Lord Trayambak); paragraph no. 8 (Mantra of Lord Shiva or Rudra); Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 1; Canto 2, paragraph no. 3 (Rudra Mantra/Sukta); Canto 2, paragraph nos. 4, 18 (Tarak Mantras of Rudra); Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 3, verse no. 12-13; Brahman 6, verse no. 5-6; Brahman 7, verse no. 1 (the seven-lettered Mantra of Rudra, known as the Shat-Rudra Mantra).

Now, let us see these Mantras in brief.

(i) The *one-word Mantra* of Shiva—It is the Lord's name 'Shiva' that is in itself a Mantra. Hence, the one-letter eclectic Mantra of Lord Shiva is *Shiva* or *Shivam*. Refer *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 4.

(ii) The *two-letter Mantra* of Shiva or Rudra is the *Rudra Mantra*—The eclectic Mantra is *Rudra-Rudra*. It is dedicated to Lord Rudra who is one of the eleven divine forms of Lord Shiva. It is described in *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 16. [The two letters are 'Ru + Dra =2.] It is so powerful and grand that it is said to incorporate all the Mantras of the not only the other two Gods of the Trinity, viz. Vishnu and Brahma, but all other Gods combined. To quote this Upanishad—"Therefore, a wise and enlightened man who repeats the great Mantra 'Rudra Rudra' and remembers the great Lord is symbolically worshipping all the Gods and repeating their Mantras. This helps him to overcome the evil effects of all sins and misdeeds (16).

{In the view of what has been expounded in this Upanishad, the Mantra ‘Rudra-Rudra’ would deem to include the divine Mantras of all the Gods of the Trinity—i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Much like OM which is the universal Mantra for the supreme transcendental Brahm, this Mantra ‘Rudra-Rudra’ is the universal Mantra for all the Gods combined.}

(iii) The *five-letter Mantra* of Lord Shiva has been described in *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 30. It is ‘Namaha Shivaaye’. [Na + Maha + Shi + Va + Ye = 5.]

(iv) The *six-letter Mantra* of Shiva or Rudra is ‘OM Namaha Shiva OM’ which is mentioned in the Atharva Veda’s *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, paragraph no. 8; *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 3, verse no. 12-13. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + OM = 6.]

The *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 4, 18 however says that that the six-letter Mantra of Lord Shiva is ‘OM Namaha Shivaaye’. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 6.] This is the Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva. [Canto 2, paragraph no. 18.]

(v) The *seven-letter Mantra* of Lord Shiva or Rudra is ‘OM Namaha Shivaaye OM’. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye + OM = 7.]

(vi) The *eight-letter Mantra* of Lord Shiva is ‘OM Namaha Mahaa-devaaye’. It is given in *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 4. [OM + Na + Maha + Ma + Haa + De + Vaa + Ye = 8.]

This Upanishad says that the eight-letter Mantra of Shiva is known as the Tarak Mantra, the one which provides liberation and deliverance to the spiritual seeker. This Mantra provides liberation and deliverance to the devotees of Lord Shiva in the Lord’s terrestrial abode known as the pilgrim city of Kashi. Preaching this Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva is equivalent to the preaching of the Mantras of the Vedas. [In other words, this is the Veda Mantra.]

(vii) The *Trayambak Mantra* is described in the *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4 which is entirely devoted to *Lord Trayambak*. It describes the meaning of this word and the Mantras dedicated to Lord Trayambak in great detail. This Mantra is given in Canto 4, paragraph nos. 1-6, and it is ‘Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushti-varadhan Urvaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamrita’.

(viii) The Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph no. 4, and *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman no. 6, verse nos. 5-6 says that the Mantra/Sukta of Lord Rudra (Shiva) should be said while preparing the sacred Bhasma (ash) for applying on the body of the ascetic.

(ix) The Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph no. 1, and Canto 2, paragraph no. 3 say that after praying to Lord Shiva by using the *Rudra Sukta/Mantra*, the worshipper should offer the Lord white Bhasma, the fruits of the Bel tree (the wood-apple tree; *Aegla marmelos*), and leaves of the Bilva tree (*Aegle marmelos*). The leaves of the Bilva tree should be green (i.e. freshly plucked) and three in number. If green leaves are not available, then dry leaves can also be offered. Now, let see what these *two Rudra Suktas/Mantras* are—

“Canto 1, paragraph no. 1 = The Lord known as Maha-Dev was an embodiment of OM (the ethereal sound manifestation of the supreme Brahm also known as Pranav). He was accompanied by his divine consort named Uma (the Mother Goddess).

He had a crown of matted hairs on his head. He had three eyes represented by the sun, the moon and the fire. He was wrapped in the hide of a tiger. He held his hands like a deer (i.e. his hands were resting on his folded-in legs as he sat in meditation posture). His body was adorned (smeared) by the 'Bhasma' (ash of the fire sacrifice).

On his forehead were marked the three lines of the Tripund (which is a sacred mark borne by ascetics). There was a subtle sweet and pleasant smile on his face. His body was cheerful and he had a pleasant demeanour (i.e. he was rested and calm; he was not agitated, fidgety or upset).

He was like a lion who was sitting in the posture known as 'Viraasan'. [This one of the many sitting postures of Yoga, and is usually adopted by brave warriors, hence the name 'Viraasan'. The word 'Vir' means one who is brave, valiant, gallant, bold, courageous, daring and mighty.]

He is so mystical and sublime that he is beyond the purview of proofs and measurements.

He is 'Anaadi and Anant'—i.e. he is without an end or beginning as he is eternal, infinite and imperishable.

He is 'Niskal'—i.e. he is the one who has no taints, faults, blemishes and imperfections that can scar his immaculacy and purity. He is immaculate and without any faults or blemishes as he is from all the corrupting influences of Maya (delusions and deceit).

He is 'Nirguna'—i.e. he has no attributes or qualities or physical forms in the true sense (as the Lord is not an ordinary God with attributes, but the Supreme Being who has no known forms, specific attributes and describable qualities).

He is 'Shanta'—i.e. he is calm, serene, peaceful and tranquil.

He is 'Niranjan'—i.e. he is faultless, flawless, uncorrupted, untainted and without any blemishes of any kind. [A Niranjan is an entity that has no defects, faults, flaws, taints, blemishes, shortcomings and scars of any kind; one who is absolutely immaculate and pristine pure. It is an epithet applied to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. one whose sublime, subtle, esoteric and mystical form is so microscopic and diffused that it cannot be seen by the naked eyes of the physical gross body, but which can only be perceived by the eye of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment.]

He is 'Niraamayee', i.e. he is healthy and without any moral or physical ailments or tainting affects that are like a disease that might afflict a person's spiritual well being. One who is free from any kind of diseases—spiritual, mental, physical, psychological, moral etc. that may taint one's character and personality.

He (Lord Maha-Dev) was pronouncing the Beej Mantra 'Hum', 'Phat' etc., and continuously repeating the holy name of the Supreme Being who is also known as 'Shiva'. That is, he was meditating upon his own pure and enlightened 'self' which is truly the Supreme Being known as Brahm manifested in the form of the Atma, the cosmic Consciousness. Hence, he was doing Japa with the Mantra 'Shiva-Shiva'.

His is a living embodiment of the virtues for which the word 'Hiranya' is an aphorism. That is, the Lord has a radiance that is like gold; his hands (limbs) have a golden radiance, his form is like gold, his countenance is golden, and he is a treasury of immaculate virtues which resemble gold. [Since gold is the most precious metal, all his virtues and characteristics are completely immaculate and of the highest quality.]

The Lord is a personification of the grand philosophy of Advaita, the philosophy of non-duality which says that there is only one Brahm or cosmic Truth in the form of Consciousness that is revealed in all the forms that this creation has taken, and therefore whatever that exists is nothing but one single Brahm. [In other words, Lord Maha-Dev is perfectly wise, enlightened and Brahm-realised in as much as he sees no difference between himself and the Supreme Being. This is the reason he is repeating the Mantra 'Shiva' while meditating.]

Since he is extremely enlightened, self-realised and Brahm-realised, he stays in the fourth state of Turiya. [This is the transcendental state of existence in which the ascetic lives in a state of trance. He is so deeply submerged in meditation and contemplation that he is not even aware of his body and what it does, and therefore there is no question of his being aware of the surrounding material world and its temptations. Hence, he is free from all corruptions and delusions that mire an ordinary soul.]

This fourth state is a representative of the Supreme Being who is beyond the Trinity Gods known as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder. Hence, the Lord who stays in this eclectic and sublime state of Consciousness is known as ‘Maha-Dev’, the great Lord. [This fact has been expressly emphasized in the Pashupat Upanishad, Purva Kand, verse no. 10, which is the nineteenth Upanishad of the Atharva Veda.]

Such a divine and majestic Lord is the fulfiller of all the desires of his devotees.

Sage Jabal Bhusund politely bowed before the Lord repeatedly, worshipped him and paid his obeisance to him, offered him fruits of the Bilva tree (*Aegle marmelos*) and Bhasma (ash of the fire sacrifice), bowed his head, and asked him with folded hands as a gesture of politeness and submission—‘Oh Lord! You are well-versed in the essence of the Vedas and their profound teachings. Please tell me about the rules and tenets pertaining to the ‘Tripund²’ as described and prescribed in the Vedas, and by following which one is able to attain Moksha (final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation). One need not take the recourse of any other means if one fully understands this doctrine. (1).

“Canto 2, paragraph no. 3 = ‘The Lord is sitting on the Nandi (the bull). His arms are of a golden hue; his general countenance also has a golden hue; and his form appears to be cast in gold.

The Lord is the eliminator or destroyer of the snare represented by the continuous cycle of birth and death that has shackled all the living beings in its vicious grip. [That is, the Lord grants the boon of Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, to all the creatures.]

He is the primordial Purush personified. [That is, Lord Shiva is a personified form of the cosmic Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing gross but invisible form of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

His neck is coloured dark with a tinge of yellow¹.

He is highly self-realised, enlightened and wise (‘Urdhva-reta’).

He has three eyes (‘Trilochan’). [The Lord has two conventional eyes, and one eye on the middle of the forehead signifying the mystical powers of insight that comes with the highest form of wisdom, enlightenment, knowledge and self-realisation.]

He has taken the form of this whole world (‘Vishwa-roop’). This is because the entire creation is a revelation of Brahm, the Supreme Being, and Shiva is a personified form of Brahm.

That is why he is said to have thousands of eyes (‘Sahastraaksham’) symbolizing countless creatures. This is also metaphor for the fact that nothing is hidden from the Lord, for he ‘sees’ everything, even the most secret and the esoteric.

Similarly, he has thousands of heads (‘Sahastra-shirsha’), and thousands of legs (‘Sahastra-charan’). In fact, the entire creation (world) is embraced in his arms; this whole creation represents his arms. {If he has ‘thousands of eyes’, then it is natural that he would also have equal number of heads. It also means that the Lord has equal number of mouths, tongues, ears, noses etc. Again, if he has thousands of legs it also implies that he must have equal number of hands. All this simply indicate that the entire creation is a majestic multifarious revelation of one single Divinity known as Shiva.}

Hence, Lord Shiva represents the Atma (soul) of the whole creation. [This reflects upon the metaphysical doctrine that the word 'Atma' refers to the pure consciousness that resides inside the body of an individual creature as his 'true self'. This Atma of the individual is the microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic Consciousness that is universal and uniformly pervades throughout this creation. This universal Atma at the macrocosmic level of creation is known as Brahm. This Brahm therefore is the subtlest and most sublime entity in existence. When this Brahm revealed itself, it went through subtle steps in its transition from the subtlest to the grossest forms. The first step was the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing, all-inclusive invisible macrocosmic form of Brahm which was the latter's first gross form. The word 'gross' when applied to the Viraat Purush is only in terms of relativity, for both Brahm and Viraat are sublime and subtle when compared to the word 'gross' as is understood in the context of the visible world of material sense objects. It is easy to understand this phenomenon—we have air all around us, but do we feel it, can we survive without it? Obviously, the answer is no. But when this same air moves or shows some 'gross' virtues, such as its form known as the 'wind' which is felt when the 'breeze' wafts gradually or a 'storm' blows violently, it is then we can actually feel it bristling against our skins; but still we can't see it. Now, when this same air has pollutants in it, like smoke or coloured gases, we can actually 'see' the air. The same thing applies to Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. The Viraat Purush is like the 'wind', and the rest of the creation that evolved from this single Viraat Purush is like the various forms the same wind has taken in this world. The grosser revelation of this Viraat Purush in the form of the visible world is akin to the instance of smoke, coloured gases or other pollutants which make us see the invisible wind move. It is the grossest form of the subtlest Brahm.]

Since Lord Shiva is Brahm personified, it is natural that all the honours and epithets applied to Brahm would also apply to Shiva.

Hence, Shiva is 'Advaita'—i.e. he is non-dual.

He is 'Nishkal'—i.e. he has no Kalaas, i.e. no separate or distinct attributes, forms, parts, divisions, variations and fractions as he is one immutable whole; one who has no taints, faults, blemishes and imperfections that can scar his immaculacy and purity; one who is immaculate and without any faults or blemishes as he is free from all the corrupting influences of Maya representing delusions, conceit and deceit).

He is 'Nishkriya'—i.e. he is not involved in any of the affairs of the world, as he is totally neutral, detached and dispassionate, has renounced everything, and being self-realised he knows that the deeds are done by the gross body and not by the Atma which is merely a neutral witness of what the body does.

He is absolutely 'Shaanta'—i.e. he is calm, peaceful, serene, rested, tranquil, having no restlessness or agitations.

He is 'Shiva'—i.e. he is an embodiment of the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, truthfulness, divinity and holiness.

He is 'Akshar'—i.e. he is imperishable and one who is represented by the divine word OM.

He is 'Avyaya'—i.e. he is not diminished; he is infinite; he is eternal, unchanging and imperishable; he is not subject to degradation.

He is the eternal Lord (the Supreme Being; Brahm) from whom Hari (Vishnu the sustainer), Har (Rudra the concluder) and Hiranyagarbha (Brahma the creator) have come into being.

This supreme Creator and Lord of creation cannot be known or verified or judged by proofs, evidences and logics.

The Lord has no beginning or end.' (3).

{Note—¹Lord Shiva's throat is dark blue or purple in colour. Since the glow and radiance of the whole body of the Lord is golden but the throat had turned black because he had kept the horrible poison he had drunk in his throat instead of allowing

it to enter the stomach. This corroding poison had emerged from the ocean when it was churned by the Gods and Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternity. The Lord had accepted to drink it to protect the rest of the creation from getting scorched by its heat and toxins. Since this creation is lodged in the Lord's own self, in his abdomen, he had kept this poison in the throat and did not allow it to enter his stomach. This resulted in the throat getting permanently burnt. The dark blue or purple colour of the Lord's throat is the result of this single event and shows the Lord's willingness to go to any length to grant his unilateral protection to this creation.

It is very interesting to note that while on the one hand Lord Shiva is depicted as being the concluder of creation—and this is assigned role amongst the Trinity of Gods consisting of Brahma, whose role is to create, Vishnu, whose role is to sustain, nourish and protect the creation, and Rudra (a form of Shiva), whose designated role is to bring about the conclusion of this creation—but on the other hand he had allowed himself to be permanently dis-coloured and take the risk of keeping the most horrible poison in existence lodged inside his body because otherwise this poison would kill the creation and scald everything in it to ashes. This is the reason why only Shiva is honoured as being the 'Maha-Deva', the 'great' God. Though Vishnu shoulders the formidable, most daunting and arduous task of taking care of the whole creation—and this is not a cake-walk and a joke considering what a man experiences in life taking care of his single family, what to talk of the whole society—this honour of being a Maha-Deva was not bestowed upon him. The same thing applies to the grand old patriarch of creation called Brahma who had not only created this gross world but even the sources of highest wisdom in the form of the venerable scriptures, but was not honoured with this title.

Hence, Shiva is truly the Supreme Being personified. One of his functions is to conclude this creation, and in this role he is known as Rudra, the angry form. But even as the same Brahm is known to have revealed himself in the form of each and every unit of creation which is extremely diverse and multifarious, the same Shiva has taken many names and assumed many roles, one of which is 'conclusion'.

The word *Shiva* refers to the third God of the Trinity, and the one who has been assigned the task of bringing the world to an end. The word itself briefly means the eclectic, glorious and beautiful virtues of truthfulness, purity, auspiciousness, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity, blissfulness, dispassion, detachment, holiness and divinity. These are accompanied by a high degree of peace, tranquility, serenity and their attendant happiness, joy and bliss. Since 'truthfulness and auspiciousness' are qualities that are beautiful, this word also means something that is beautiful and beyond reproach.

Briefly therefore, the word 'Shiva' means 'one who is auspicious, always pure, holy, divine, truthful, beautiful and blissful'. Shiva is the Lord who is self-realised and a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth.

The *Maho-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 7 describes that Shiva was born from the forehead of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, invisible and all-inclusive gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 41 espouses that Shiva lives in the heart of the creature as an embodiment of 'Sat-Chit-Anand', i.e. as his Atma—"Shiva, as Sat-Chit-Anand personified, always lives in the heart. He is a constant witness of all that is happening. That is why the heart is regarded as the doorway to liberation and deliverance from the traps that have been laid out by this delusory and cunning world of artificiality to ensnare the creature in its tentacles."

The *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition was preached by Lord Shiva himself to sage Jabal Bhusund, and it highlights the fact that Lord Shiva is no ordinary God, or even a senior one being a member of the Trinity of Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder, but

is the supreme transcendental Brahm himself personified. Shiva is the Supreme Being himself. Refer Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 1; Canto 2, paragraph no. 3, 6-8.

The *Yogtattva Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 92-94 says that Lord Shiva, in his form as Rudra, is the patron deity and personification of the fire element, and it is no wonder then that he is surrounded by ‘fire-spitting’ serpents as a symbolism of this fact. In this Upanishad’s verse nos. 98-102 it is asserted that Shiva is the patron deity and personification of the sky element.

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 8, 10, 13, 15 and 19 affirms that Shiva is invariably wrapped by serpents.

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes Lord Shiva as the south-facing Lord and elaborately elucidates the metaphysical significance of this form.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 4, verse no. 29 says that the Lord with three eyes (Trinetrum) is the bearer of this world having three aspects or the one who is the foundation upon which all the three Gunas such as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna rest (Trigunadhaaram) and is the one from whom the Trinity Gods (i.e. the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder Rudra) are born. This Lord is none other than Lord Maheshwar, the great Ishwar or Lord of creation who is also known as Shiva, Ishan, Isha etc. This Lord is synonymous with the supreme transcendental Brahm. This fact is endorsed Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 32, and in *Dakshin Murti* or *Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad*.

As the deity of the fire element, he is said to have ‘three eyes’ (*Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 93), and as the deity of the sky element he is depicted as having a moon tucked in his lock of hairs, besides having five mouths, ten arms and three eyes (*Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 100). Now let us see their significance.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/42 says that it is Lord Ram who has manifested as ‘Maheshwar’, the great God. Since this term is conventionally applied to Lord Shiva, it follows that Shiva is actually Lord Ram in this form. Its verse no. 4/43 clearly endorses this view when it says that Lord Ram has manifested himself as Mahadev—the great God. This term ‘Maha-dev’ is also conventionally used for Lord Shiva.

The Atharva Veda’s *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 32 emphasises that Lord Rudra or Shiva is also known as *Pashupati*. To quote—“One must understand that the knowledge of the self-illuminated *Hans* that has been revealed in this Upanishad deals with the eclectic and the divine knowledge of the pure cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma as well as Brahm.

This ‘Hans’ is also revealed in the form of Lord Rudra (Lord Shiva), who is also known as Lord Pashupati¹.

It is this Brahm that is represented by Pranav, the cosmic ethereal sound encapsulated in the word Mantra OM. It is this Pranav representing Brahm that provides one with liberation and deliverance from this mortal gross world (32).

{¹Lord Shiva who has full control over his sense organs and their inherent animal-like instincts and behaviour—because he is a highly self-realised and enlightened deity who is chosen by exalted ascetics and spiritual aspirants as their patron God—is known as Pashupati, literally the Lord of animals. Since Lord Shiva tolerates no nonsense and ruthlessly overcomes the wayward tendencies of the sense organs and the mind, showing anger at them for their natural grossness and tendency to commit mischief and misdeeds, he is also known as ‘Rudra’, the angry one. Lord Shiva is uncompromising and unrelenting in his pursuit of immaculacy, purity, auspiciousness, righteousness, nobility, probity and propriety, and hence called Rudra, the angry God.

‘Rudra’ has zero tolerance for impertinence, mischief and nonsense. ‘Shiva’ is, on the other hand, calm, tolerant and forgiving. Shiva always remains in a state of

meditation and contemplation, a state that is depicted in his posture of blissfulness and half-closed eyes. Rudra, on the other hand, spews fire and brimstone. While Shiva symbolizes the virtues of Brahm marked by blissfulness, tranquility, calmness, wisdom, enlightenment, self-awareness and contentedness, Rudra represents the qualities of dynamism, vitality, vigour, strength and energy present in Brahm.

The question arises ‘why did Shiva become Rudra (angry)?’ The answer is that when Shiva found that his sense organs and mind did not allow him the peace that he sought by meditation and contemplation upon the ‘Atma, the self’, he became angry over them, and severely took them to task—i.e. he became ‘Rudra’ or angry. It is like the case of a teacher who is of a very calm nature and loves his students like they were his own sons, but when he finds that his kindness and loving nature is being misused by the students who create ruckus in the class, he has to become stern and spank them in order to restore discipline and decorum. But that does not mean that he is cruel or wishes to harm his students in the least. This same thing applies to Shiva.

Shiva becomes Rudra in order to ruthlessly punish the creatures of this creation who behave like savages or animals. This is necessary for him as he is the Supreme Being who has the mandate to maintain order and balance in this creation, and he would be failing in his moral duties and obligations if he tries to maintain a false exterior of calmness when his interior is agitated by the upheaval all around. The Supreme Being that Shiva is has an obligation to uphold positive traits and the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety in this creation even if it means that his own image of being calm and forgiving is questioned and overshadowed by anger and vehemence.

Just as the case of severe and malignant diseases like cancer and tuberculosis requiring an equally strong medicine, the evil, pervert and demonic forces of creation require an equally strong antidote to be overcome.

Therefore, that aspect of Brahm, the Supreme Being, which helps the Jiva (the living beings of this creation) control evil tendencies and negativity which make him animal-like is known as ‘Pashupat Brahm’, and the effort that a Jiva makes to achieve this eclectic goal is known as ‘Pashu-harta Yagya’.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 8 says that Shiva is known as *Hans*; and Canto 1, verse no. 9 says that he is *Brahm*.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 10, 14 assert that Shiva is the creator of everything in this creation, and Canto 1, verse no. 13 says that Shiva represents the creation itself much like Brahm, the *Supreme Being* who is also treated as being an embodiment of the entire creation.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 11 says that *Shiva represents the third state of consciousness known as the Sushupta state*.

The Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 6 asserts that Shiva and Rudra are one. The difference between the two names is due to the fact that the same Lord exists in two forms which appear to be diametrically opposite of each other in their characteristic features.

If we closely examine this verse we will understand the difference between the two terms ‘Shiva’ and ‘Rudra’ on the one hand, and between ‘Brahm’ and ‘Shakti’ on the other hand. Lord Shiva is extremely calm, serene, self-contented, self-realised and blissful like Brahm, and is therefore regarded as a personification of the latter (i.e. of Brahm). He remains perpetually involved in doing mediation and contemplation, remaining happy and submerged in the thoughts of the transcendental Truth. Hence, he is regarded as the patron deity of ascetics who themselves are regarded as personified forms of Brahm because they have become extremely self-realised, i.e. they have experienced the truth about themselves as being the Atma which is pure consciousness. This Atma is a microcosmic form of the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation known as Brahm.

When the same Shiva assumes an angry form of Rudra at the time of conclusion of creation, he shows an astonishing and an astounding level of dynamism, energy, power, strength and vigour that are synonyms of the cosmic Shakti of Brahm. It is like the case of lightening that is present in the dark rain-bearing clouds in the sky. This lightening appears suddenly, streaks across the sky and causes a huge blast of light and thunder, and if it happens to strike the earth leaves behind scorched trees and ruined buildings, only to vanish without trace in another moment in the sky, withdrawing itself into the thick bank of cloud from which it made its appearance.

This analogy of the lightening appearing from and disappearing into the clouds in the sky would explain the phenomenon of Rudra vis-à-vis Shiva, and Shakti vis-à-vis Brahm. Rudra appears momentarily from Shiva, accomplishes the task for which Shiva had to assume this ferocious and ruthless form of anger, wrath and vehemence personified, only to vanish into the calm and tranquil form of Shiva. Similarly Shakti appears from the neutral cosmic entity known as the divine Brahm, accomplishes what is expected of it, and then disappears into Brahm without trace.

Since everything in creation is a manifestation of Brahm, this unique character of Brahm and its relationship with its dynamism revealed as Shakti is also revealed in all the five primary elements of creation such as sky, air, water, fire and earth. Let us take one example of earth to understand how it works out.

The earth is the grossest of the five elements, being heaviest and most dense. It is inert and lifeless on the outside like any other celestial body of the fathomless heaven, but still it conceives and harbours all imaginable forms of life, takes proper care of them and provides endlessly for their necessities of existence. The earth is self-sufficient in this respect, and it does not need any other help to sustain life, or even to replenish its reserves which never deplete inspite of constant exploitation. So in this sense the 'earth' is Brahm personified. But when the 'mother earth' becomes angry, she vents her anger as earthquakes, landslides, floods, tsunamis, famines and draughts, leading to large scale destruction and havoc. This is the Shakti form of earth.

Then again, the earth is a solid piece of cosmic body which is lifeless, neutral and barren at one place as evidenced by the endless stretches of rocks and sand seen at some place on its surface, but at the same time it constitutes of charming and vibrant forms of endless variety of fauna and flora symbolizing life in all its splendour and grandeur at the other place. Even when the earth seems to be neutral, lifeless and inane, it still has its inherent dynamism and energy as shown by its magnetic field and its movement not only around its own self but also around the sun. This means that 'earth' stands for Brahm as well as for Brahm's Shakti simultaneously.

Likewise, if we take the example of the fire and the water, we find that on the one hand they are harbingers of life, growth and development on the one hand, and when annoyed become the cause of widespread destruction and havoc on the other hand. For instance, fire is an essential component of life because without the fire there will be no warmth and light, and the resultant chill and darkness would snuff life out of this creation. But the same fire can scorch everything to ashes if it becomes annoyed and decides to punish the world it had so benevolently nurtured.

The water also behaves in a similar fashion. While water is called the benevolent 'elixir of life' as it is the only element which actually cradles life in its merciful arms by providing it with readymade nourishment and acts as a buffer, a coolant and a soft lubricant that helps this creation to overcome the harsh and abrasive conditions on earth, which is nothing but a solid and rugged ball of thick and hardened rock that would have caused severe injury to the creation if it was not protected by the water, the same water can wipe out life if it turns malevolent as is evident during floods, high ocean tides and huge waves, tsunamis etc., or as observed during draughts when the water decides to withdraw itself and let the life parch itself out by thirst.

Air also exhibits similar characteristics. On the one hand the air is absolutely essential for life to exist in this world, because without air the life would suffocate to death, but

the same air can cause ruin when it becomes angry, as is proved during fierce storms and cyclones.

The sky is the cosmic bowl which harbours everything that exists in this universe, from the smallest piece of cosmic debris to the huge galaxies and planetary systems. It is in the sky that our earth lives, and it is in the sky that the air we breathe is contained. But it is the same sky in from which devastating meteors and asteroids might strike upon the earth to wipe out entire generations of creatures. [It is one such event that had wiped out the ancient dinosaurs from the surface of earth, and more recently one such meteorite had blasted its way down to earth across the skies in the Ural Mountains of northern Russia which injured thousands of people and cause material damage to buildings and factories.] During severe thunderstorms, hurricanes and cyclones, it is the sky that is said to ‘open up’ and pour rain on the earth which cause deluge, or blow fierce winds that strike out viciously any thing standing up in its path much like the swing of the Vajra of Indra, the king of Gods. It is one such deluge pouring down from the sky or heaven that is expected to wipe out the present generation at the time of doomsday. Then again, during wars, it is from the sky that rockets, missiles and arrows shower down upon armies to kill and slay mercilessly. So we conclude that while all the elements and all the units of creation are indeed manifestations of Shiva or Brahm, the latter’s life-fostering and benevolent nature is displayed in these units when they act as aids to development of life and its growth, while their destructive aspect is a representative of Rudra. The dynamism, energy, vigour, strength and abilities displayed by all the units of creation are, however, a manifestation of the Shakti in its many myriad forms.

Names of Lord Shiva and their significance—

Rudra—As the concluder of creation, Lord Shiva is known as Rudra—because then he has to assume a ruthless and angry form. The word ‘Rudra’ means anger and wrathfulness. [Refer Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 10.]

Mritunjaya—Shiva is called ‘Mritunjaya’ because he has conquered or vanquished death. [Refer Atharva Veda’s Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 1.]

Yajamahe—Shiva is called ‘Yajamahe’ because he represents the basic or fundamental Truth and Authority of creation that we offer our obeisance to. The word ‘Yajan’ means worship and honour, and ‘Mahe’ means me. So, with the combined word ‘Yajan’ and ‘Mahe’ we invoke the essential Tattwa or the basic Truth that forms the fundamental cosmic Reality and the ultimate force that is behind all aspects of this creation. Shiva represents the Absolute Truth and Reality known as the universal cosmic Consciousness of creation that is the only thing that is true, eternal, constant and steady in this otherwise transient and false world. [Refer Atharva Veda’s Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 2.]

Aghor—Shiva is also called ‘Aghor’, meaning the most fierce, terrible, formidable and an unconventional form of the Supreme Being who has an odd and mysterious existence. [Refer: Atharva Veda’s Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 10.]

Sugandhim—Shiva is called ‘Sugandhim’ because of an aura of divinity, holiness, purity, spirituality and majesty that effuses from him and radiates in all the directions in an invisible form like the sweet fragrance of a beautiful flower. The word ‘Sugandha’ means good fragrance or a sweet and pleasant aroma. Lord Shiva is omnipresent and an omniscient Lord; his auspicious glories, magnificence and eclectic virtues are well known and famous in all the directions of this creation; the Lord radiates a divine halo wherever he is present and worshipped, and it is as invigorating and spiritually rejuvenating as the fragrance or aroma of a divine flower.

Hence, the term ‘Sugandham’ is used for him. [The word ‘Sugandha’ means pleasant fragrance, sweet and attractive aroma, an enchanting scent.] [Refer Atharva Veda’s Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 3.]

Pushti-varadhan—Lord Shiva is honoured by the word ‘Pushti-varadhan’ because he creates all the worlds, sustains them, protects them, nourishes them, makes them health, helps in their growth and development, and enhances their glories and importance by living in all of them uniformly as he is all-pervading, all-including and all-encompassing. Hence, he is honoured by the epithet ‘Pushti-varadhan’. [Refer Atharva Veda’s Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4.]

Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti—Lord Shiva is called ‘Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti’. Just like the musk-melon is firmly attached to its stalk, a creature is also sternly clasped in the shackle of death. When he breaks free from this vicious grip of the cycle of birth and death, he finds Mukti or final liberation and deliverance. [Lord Shiva is the most enlightened of the Gods in the pantheon. This is why he is the patron deity of ascetics and hermits. He can liberate the creature from the cycle of birth and death. He is depicted in the Purans as having his terrestrial abode in the holy city of Kashi where he gives Mukti to the dying man who is brought for cremation on the banks of the holy river Ganges.] [Refer Atharva Veda’s Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 5.]

Mamritaata—Lord Shiva is called ‘Mamritaata’ because the worshipper attains the elixir of life that gives him eternity and imperishability. He becomes one like Lord Rudra himself. [Refer Atharva Veda’s Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 6.]

Ishaan/Ishan—Lord Shiva is called ‘Ishan’ because he is the greatest, the most wise and exalted amongst the Gods in this creation. He is the *Isha* or the Supreme Lord of creation, and a symbol of cosmic authority and power of the Supreme Being. Hence, he is known as *Ishan*—the symbol, the icon or the emblem of the Supreme Being known as Brahm.

This term Ishan has been defined in *Atharvashir Upanishad* of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 4 as follows—“Why is he (Brahm in the form of Rudra) known as ‘Ishan’ (literally meaning the ‘Lord’ and his ‘insignia or authority’)? It is because he (Rudra) has full control over all the Gods and their powers and authority. Ishan signifies the Lord’s overriding authority and complete control over all the aspects of creation that are individually controlled by these Gods who actually act on behalf of Rudra representing the dynamic form of Brahm. These Gods are nothing but the different forces of Nature personified.

It is you who controls this entire creation as Indra, the king of Gods as well as the organs of the creature’s body over which these Gods rule. That is also why you are called ‘Ishan’.”

According to *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 38-39, Ishan is one of the ten Dikpaals/Digpaals or the custodians of the celestial world. He takes care of the ‘Ishan Kone’ or the North-East direction. His weapon is ‘Shul’ or a sharp spear or lancet or a trident.

Maheshwar/Maha-deva—References: (i) Atharva Veda = Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 34; Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika 4; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 1.

Lord Shiva is considered as the most exalted and wisest amongst the Gods, and is therefore honoured with the epithet *Maha Deva* or the Great God, and *Maheshwar* or the Great Ishwar as he is regarded as the supreme Lord of the entire creation. [Refer:

Atharva Veda's Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika 4; and Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 1.]

The Sharav Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 34, says that Shiva is *Maheshwar* as he is the Lord who provides Mukti or liberation and deliverance to the creature from the formidable snare that traps the latter in this gross world, helping the creature to break free from the tormenting cycle of birth and death which is very difficult to break free from.

In his form as the liberator of the soul of the creature by destroying the latter's gross external body and freeing the soul, he is known as *Sharav*. Shiva had assumed this form to liberate Lord Vishnu from the horrible body of Nrisingh (half man and half lion). [Refer Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 6-8.]

'Maheshwar' or 'Maha-Deva' are both names of Lord Shiva. The term 'Maheshwar' means the 'Great Ishwar or Lord', while the term 'Maha-deva' means the 'Great God'. Obviously, they both mean the same.

However, the term 'Maheshwar' has been defined independently in *Atharvashir Upanishad* of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 4 as follows—"Why are you (Rudra as a manifestation of Brahm) called 'Maheshwar' (literally meaning 'the great Lord')? It is because you show your benevolence and grace upon those devotees who worship you selflessly in order to attain Gyan or true knowledge. [As the greatest teacher and preacher in creation, it is you who can only give the knowledge of Truth. This knowledge is known only to you. Hence, you are great amongst even the Gods who are supposed to be wiser and more knowledgeable than ordinary mortals.] It is you who empowers the faculty of speech to speak and express this Truth. You have forsaken all sorts of delusions and overcome all ignorance, and instead remain steady and unwavering in the knowledge of Truth that you have acquired. You are self realised and most wise and enlightened. This gives you immense fame and honour; it establishes you as the greatest enlightened one in creation. This is why you are called Maheshwar.

This is how the divine characters and virtues of Rudra have been outlined here in this Upanishad."

In the Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 1, Lord Shiva has been addressed as *Maha-deva*, and it explains *why* it is so as follows—"Since he is extremely enlightened, self-realised and Brahm-realised, he stays in the fourth state of Turiya. {This is the transcendental state of existence in which the ascetic lives in a state of trance. He is so deeply submerged in meditation and contemplation that he is not even aware of his body and what it does, and therefore there is no question of his being aware of the surrounding material world and its temptations. Hence, he is free from all corruptions and delusions that mire an ordinary soul. }

This fourth state is a representative of the Supreme Being who is beyond the Trinity Gods known as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder. Hence, the Lord who stays in this eclectic and sublime state of Consciousness is known as 'Maha-Dev', the great Lord. {This fact has been expressly emphasized in the Pashupat Upanishad, Purva Kand, verse no. 10, which is the nineteenth Upanishad of the Atharva Veda. }

The *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* gives the Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva as 'OM Namaha Maha-devaaye' in paragraph no. 4 of the same Canto 2.

Shambhu—He is known as *Shambhu* as he is the one who remains uniform, unruffled and calm even under adverse situations. Shambhu is one who exists or is established in an enlightened state of highest consciousness (i.e. is 'Bhu') that is marked by perfect self control, complete neutrality, absolute tranquility, serenity, peacefulness and blissfulness. Since Lord Shiva possesses all these grand auspicious virtues, he is called 'Shambhu'. Refer: Atharvashikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Kandika 3.

This Upanishad declares that Shambhu is the highest deity to be worshipped and adored, and he represents the fifth state of consciousness that is called the Turiyateet, and to the fourth aspect of the ethereal word OM—i.e. when the word has been said fully and the mouth closes. The first letter of OM is A and it represents Brahma the creator, the second letter U represents Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation, the third letter M represents Rudra the annihilator and one of the names of Shiva, and the three and half letter called the ‘Ardha Matra’ represented by the horizontal ‘S’ mark attached to the symbol of OM on its side represents Ishan, one of the names of Shiva and the God who is the ruler of all other Gods. Finally, the fourth complete Matra symbolised by the dot on the top is Shambhu or Lord Shiva. This Shambhu or Shiva is Brahm in its best and most pristine form.

Lord Shiva is called Shambhu because he possesses the highest knowledge of the ‘truth and the Consciousness’ known as Brahm, and being self-realised he is a personified form of Brahm. Therefore, Shambhu is the supreme transcendental Lord of creation who surpasses all earlier states of existence such as the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Shshupta or deep sleep state and the Turiya or post-Sushupta state to permanently live in the Turiyateet state of perpetual bliss and tranquility.

The Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 18 says that Lord Shiva who is known as Shambhu is also known as Pashupaat and Maha-deva.

Laya-kaari—Lord Shiva brings about an end to delusions, and establish oneness and uniformity in creation by removing or eliminating or dissolving (‘Laya’) the artificial distinction in the various states of Consciousness (such as the Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta, Turiya) that are caused by ignorance of the reality and its attendant delusions.

Pashupati/Pashupaat—References: (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 8, 18; Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 14; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 10-11, 29, 32; Uttara Kand/Canto 2, verse no. 7. (ii) Sam Veda = Jabalu-panishad, verse nos. 11-18.

Shiva is called *Pashupati* or *Pashupaat* because he is the Lord of lowly living beings who have animal-like instincts—i.e. those who are engrossed in pursuing the urge for self-gratification and pleasures of the sense objects of this gross world without realizing that they getting sucked in the vortex of endless miseries and being pulled away from peace and happiness.

The *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 8 explains the meaning of this term as follows—“Anyone who knows and understands these eclectic virtues of my (Shiva’s) divine cosmic form (as Brahm, the Supreme Being) is freed from the fetters that shackle him to this material world like an animal held in captivity.

I (Shiva) am known as ‘Pashupaat’—one who liberates animals from their shackles; it also means freeing a living being from his animal-like lowly instincts that demean the exalted nature of his Atma. [Here, the ‘animal’ refers to the Jiva, the living being or the creature, and the ‘shackle’ to (i) the never ending cycle of birth and death, (ii) to the numerous temptations of this mundane artificial and deluding material world of sense objects, and (iii) to the evil and lowly natural instincts that may exist in the Jiva that would undermine the holiness and divinity of his Atma. The Lord ensures that such lowly traits in his character are eliminated for good so that the creature can find liberation and deliverance, or emancipation and salvation.] [8]”

The *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 says—“All the Gods are like animals in front of him. That is, all the Gods are under his overall command and depend upon him for their survival and protection. That is why the Lord is honoured by the epithet ‘Pashupatinath’ or the Lord of animals.”

Refer also *Jabalu-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, verse nos. 11-18.

Ahankar, or pride and ego, makes a man no less than an animal. This is stressed in *Jabalu-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, verse nos. 11-18, and *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 which stresses that 'Isha', or the Lord Shiva who is regarded as the supreme Lord of creation, had to become a 'Pashupati', Lord of animals, just because he is the undisputed Lord of all the creatures, and those creatures who have lost wisdom and a sense of righteousness, those who are overcome with Ahankar, are no better than animals.

When the 'Ahankar' is eliminated or symbolically reduced to ashes, the creature becomes an 'Ish' from a 'Pashupati'; in other words he has become a purified creature in the place of an animal-like creature. This transformation or metamorphosis—from an animal to a non-animal or from an animal-like creature to a wise and erudite person—is tantamount to acquiring truthful knowledge and become spiritually wise and enlightened.

The Lord is especially honoured by the epithet of 'Pashupati' because an enlightened worshipper targets all his spiritual endeavours towards attaining high levels of purity and holiness that entails that he first controls his basic animal-like natural instincts; he is expected to have completely exercised total self-restraint on his sense organs. Brahm is not sitting somewhere in the sky, but the Lord resides inside one's own inner-self as his Atma. This Atma is the Lord of the creature. So when a worshipper pays his obeisance to 'Pashupati Parmatma' he is actually honouring the Atma which has learnt to practice exemplary self-control over animal-like instincts, characters, qualities and behaviour.

Tripurari/Tripura-raari—Refer (i) Atharva Veda = *Sharav Upanishad*, verse no. 14.

The *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 describes that Lord Shiva is also known as the slayer of the demon Tripurasur. Hence, Shiva or Rudra is also called Tripurari. This is because of the following legend associated with the Lord. Tarakaasur was the son of Vajraanga and his consort Varaangi. He had done severe Tapa (austerity and penance) as a result of which the creator Brahma had granted him several boons which had made him invincible. He was killed by Lord Subramanya, the son of Shiva and Parvati. He had three sons—Taaraaksha, Kamlaaksha and Vidyunmaali. They had also pleased Brahma and by his blessings built three great cities, collectively called 'Tripura'. These cities were made of gold, silver and iron. When they became a nuisance for the Gods, Shiva destroyed these three cities and the demons with one arrow. These three demon brothers are collectively called *Tripuraasur*. Therefore he got the name of Tripurari—one who destroyed the three enemy cities.

Kamari/Kaamaari—Lord Shiva is also known as Kaamaari or Kamari, literally the one who had reduced to ashes the pride of Kaamdeo, the God of passions and lust. The Lord had vanquished the haughtiness and arrogance of this God of passions and his belief that he is invincible and infallible. This fact has been stated in the *Sharav Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 15, which says that Lord Shiva had subdued even the God of Death known as Yam and the God of passions known as Kamdeo cupid. Hence, he is known as 'Kamari/Kaamaari'—the Lord who had killed or conquered Kaam, the negative quality of having passions, lust, yearnings and longings; the desire for gratification of the natural carnal instincts in a living being; longing for sensual pleasures.

The legend associated with this event is briefly as follows—"Once when Shiva was in deep meditative trance and was teased by Kamdeo, the God of passions, at the behest of Gods who had wanted Shiva to marry and produce a male child who would kill the demons, he felt so annoyed by Kamdeo's impertinence that he opened this third eye to burn him down."

The story of Shiva subduing Yam has been narrated in the Purans as follows—“Shiva had trounced *Yam*, the God of death, to save his devotee Maarkandeya. Sage Maarkandey was the son of sage Maarkandu. He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva, the patron God of death, so much so that when death approached him personified as Kaal when the sage was yet quite young because destiny had it that he would die still when young, he clung to the Shiva Lingam (the image of Shiva) with the greatest of devotion, surrender and urgency that comes with one facing certain death. Lord Shiva appeared and prevented Yam, the God of death from tying him in his snare and taking him away. The Lord blessed him with a virtual eternal life, blessing him that he would live for another 14 Kalpas (1 Kalpa = 1 day of Brahma or roughly 4.32 billion human years). His magnum opus is the ‘Maarkandey Puran’. He had also edited and abridged the Manusmriti, the code of life and conduct as laid by the first human named Manu to regulate society and act as a constitution and manual for ready reference for the forthcoming human race, into eight thousand verses, and passed it to sage Bhargava. His reference comes in the Mahabharat epic when he approaches the Pandavas and taught them the principles of Dharma (code of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety and nobility). He was the one who had enlightened Yudisthira that Krishna was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Vanapurva, 189). In the same Mahabharat, he preaches the celestial sage Narad the laws of Dharma (Anushaasan-purva, 50-62).”

Parmeshwar—The word means the Supreme Ishwar or the Supreme Lord. Lord Shiva is addressed with this honourable epithet in the Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph no. 3.

Trinetrum/Trinetra/Trilaksha/Lalaataksha—

Refer (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 6; and Canto 2, paragraph no. 21; Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 10, 14; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-2; (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 93.

The word *Trinetra* means the Lord who has three eyes, two conventional eyes and one rare eye of wisdom located in the center of the forehead, between the eyebrows and just above the root of the nose. Hence, Lord Shiva is also known as Lord *Trinetrum*. [‘Tri’ = three; ‘Netra’ = eyes; ‘Laksha’ = to see.]

The location of the third eye in the center of the forehead has given Shiva the name of *Lalaataksha*. [‘Lalaat’ = forehead.]

The *third eye* is not some physical eye but a subtle eye symbolising the Lord’s high level of enlightenment and wisdom. This burning of the evil world by opening of the third eye of Shiva is a metaphoric way of saying that a creature can use his eyes of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment to overcome all delusions and misconceptions about the truth and reality, along with all mischief as well as negativity and evil tendencies in this world. The ‘burning’ is elimination of such negativity and perversions.

According to Yoga philosophy, an ascetic focuses his Pran or vital winds at this spot in the forehead where he experiences enlightenment and the nectar of bliss dripping from it. By the way, Shiva is regarded as the patron God of all ascetics precisely for this reason.

There is a legendary story associated with this third eye. Once, Parvati, his divine consort, had closed his two eyes, and as a result the world was plunged in darkness. To save the world from this all-encompassing darkness, Shiva willed a third eye between the two eyebrows. This eye spouted fire with its accompanying heat and light. So, the celestial sun can be regarded as a symbol of this third eye.

Once when Shiva was in deep meditative trance and was teased by Kamdeo, the God of passions, at the behest of Gods who had wanted Shiva to marry and produce a male child who would kill the demons, he felt so annoyed by Kamdeo's temerity and impertinence that he opened this third eye to burn him down.

According to the Atharva Veda's *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 21, the three eyes of Shiva or Rudra stand for the Sun, the Moon and the Fire. These three entities are regarded as the eternal sources of light in this creation. The Sun and the Fire provide the heat and energy so essential for sustenance of life besides being an eternal source of light, while the Moon is regarded as the pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of bliss and the soothing nectar that neutralises the scorching effects of the Sun and the Fire.

The third eye, as has been noted above, stands for the excellent level of wisdom, erudition, knowledge, enlightenment and omniscience that the Lord possesses.

The *Sharav Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse nos. 10 and 14 says as follows—

“Verse no. 10= We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who can burn to ashes the entire world by the fierce spurt of fire emanating from the third eye located in his forehead¹, and is so gracious that he re-creates it once again after punishing it (for its sins and misdeeds by reducing it to ashes), and then offers it his protection (10).

“Verse no. 14 = We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra whose three eyes are the Sun, the Moon and the Fire (representing eternal sources of light, life, energy, warmth and heat) (14).”

From the metaphysical perspective, his two eyes are the conventional eyes, and his third symbolizes his deep insight and great wisdom and enlightenment. Shiva personifies the fire element which also has a symbolic significance. The fire is known to burn all impurities present in gold when it is put into it, thereby purifying the metal. Similarly, fire is used in blast furnaces to extract iron from its ore. Fire has the inherent ability to reduce to ashes all filth and garbage, which is a metaphoric way of saying that a person who has worshipped this element in the form of Shiva is supposed to have burnt all his faults, blemishes and shortcomings that taint his character and soul, thereby purifying his inner self. The ash is indicative of total renunciation and detachment from the world of materialism, because it is indicative of a renunciate way of life and symbolically stands for burning of everything into the fire pit. That is why Lord Shiva has been called the patron God of ascetics, hermits and Sanyasis who worship the fire element only.

Besides these points, Shiva is the God assigned the task of concluding the world which necessitates his being closely associated with the ‘fire element’ in the sense that he must be as unrelenting, merciless, powerful and ferocious as the latter in order to conclude this creation inspite of all the odds. He must reduce everything to ashes just like the fire does. And it is from this ash that the new creation would emerge in due course. Herein lie the magic of creation and its chief Lord, Brahm, the Supreme Being—the fact that a new creation rises from ashes!

To quote *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 93—“This (i.e. the fire element is the symbolic abode of Lord Rudra or Shiva. [That is, he symbolises the fire element.] One should meditate upon this Lord who has three eyes, who is the one renowned for granting boons (to his followers and devotees, and in the presence case to the ascetic), who is as splendid, illuminated and radiant as a sun which has just risen, and who has the ash of the fire sacrifice smeared all over his body (just like an ascetic, indicating that he is their great icon and patron deity of ascetics) (93).”

Trayambak—The word *Trayambak* means the Lord who has a most unconventional form with one extra eyes oddly placed in the forehead. Lord Shiva's behaviour and general bearing are also most unconventional and odd because he is at once an incarnation of the eclectic virtues of peace, renunciation, detachment, tranquility and

blissful, and at another moment he becomes personified form of anger and wrath. On the one hand his cosmic form is the Supreme Being, the Greatest amongst the Gods ('Maha-deva'), and in another form he is a gross Lingam (Shiva's gross symbol made of stone). In one instance he is lost in meditation and contemplation, being completely detached from the outside world, and in another instance he is said to have a family consisting of his divine consort Parvati or Uma, the divine Mother, and sons known as Ganesh and Kartikeya. Hence, he is called *Tryambak*—the 'odd one'.

The word also means 'the Lord of the three ('Traya' = 3) worlds' consisting of the heavens, the earth and the hell; the cosmos, the terrestrial world, and the nether world.

The Lord's Mantra is given in the *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4 is entirely devoted to Lord Trayambak. It describes the meaning of this word and the Mantras dedicated to Lord Trayambak in great detail. This *Trayambak Mantra* is given in paragraph nos. 1-6, and it is 'Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushti-varadhan Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamritaata'.

Lord *Tryambak*'s name appears in the following Upanishads—

- (i) Atharva Veda's *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph no. 6 which says that his Mantra should be said when the worshipper applies the sacred Bhasma (ash of the fire sacrifice) on his body from the toe to the head.
- (ii) The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4 is entirely devoted to Lord Trayambak. It describes the meaning of this word and the Mantras dedicated to Lord Trayambak in great detail. This Trayambak Mantra is given in paragraph nos. 1-6, and it is 'Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushti-varadhan Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamritaata'.

Neelkantha—'The Lord with a purple or blue-tinged throat'. Lord Shiva is known as 'Neelkanth' because he had drunk the horrible poison called Halaahal which emerged as a scorching froth at the time of churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit or the ambrosia of life and eternity. The legend goes that Lord Shiva had drunk the fierce poison that emerged at the time of churning of the celestial ocean in the beginning of creation by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the nectar of eternity and bliss. As soon as this boiling poison came out, there was the fear of the entire creation being scalded by its heat and ferocity. So Lord Shiva took the name of Lord Ram and gulped it in one mouthful. But the Lord knew that if this poison entered his abdomen the whole creation will be annihilated nevertheless as it resided in his abdomen. This shows that Lord Shiva is none but the supreme Brahman in whose body the entire creation resides like the embryo lives in its mother's womb. Hence, the merciful Lord kept the poison in his throat, giving it a purple colour. {Refer: (i) Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 11, 16. (ii) Mahabharat, Adi Parva, Canto 18. In its verse no. 18 it is stated that—(a) Lord Shiva had drunk the poison while invoking and repeating the holy Mantra, and of course that Mantra was the holy name of Lord Ram because the Lord is Shiva's patron deity, and (b) this is the reason why his throat became dark blue or purple, because he had retained the poison in his throat instead of gulping it down in his stomach. (iii) The same fact is endorsed in Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 19. (iv) Tulsidas' Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 157-158 allude to Lord Shiva drinking the Halaahal poison.}

Nataraj—One of mystical forms of Lord Shiva is known as the 'Nataraj' (pronounced as 'Nuta-Raaj'). The word 'Nat' means to dance, and 'Raaj' means a king or an expert who knows the secrets of any kind of art. So, when Lord Shiva performs his cosmic dance he is known as 'Nataraj'. This mystical form of Lord Shiva is known as the 'Nataraj' because it represents the Lord's cosmic dance that symbolizes both the destruction and the creation of the universe, and it reveals the cycles of death

and birth. Since one dances only when he is extremely happy and ecstatic, this Nataraj dance of Lord Shiva indicates that the Lord is extremely blissful and ecstatic in self-realisation. This pose is for the welfare of the world, and to tell the world how one enjoys total bliss upon self-realisation. In the pose of Nataraj, the 'King of Dance Forms', Shiva is giving darshan (divine viewing) to his beloved devotees within the abode of Consciousness, which is the heart of man. In other words, only when one becomes self-realised and experiences the existence of the pure conscious Atma inside one's heart, inside one's inner-self, that he can dance in ecstasy, lost in bliss and oblivious of the surrounding world.

During this form of cosmic dance that is known as 'Tandav' (pronounced as 'Taan-dav'), Lord Shiva is depicted as having crushed under his feet the demon of ignorance called 'Apasmara Purusha'. This demon of ignorance is created when the creature forgets the truth and reality of his true 'self' and that of existence as a whole, and the killing of this demon stands for overcoming ignorance and its attendant delusions. One hand is stretched across his chest and points towards the uplifted foot, indicating the release from earthly bondage of the devotee. The fire represents the final destruction of creation. But since Lord Shiva is the 'Maha-Dev', the great God, he is simultaneously responsible for bringing to an end this creation as well as creating it once again.

Therefore, this dance of the Nataraj is also an act of creation whereby the Lord arouses dormant energies and scatters the ashes of the universe in a pattern that will form the design, the contours and the texture of the ensuing creation.

Sharav—In his form as the liberator of the soul of the creature by destroying the latter's gross external body and freeing the soul, he is known as *Sharav*. Shiva had assumed this form to liberate Lord Vishnu from the horrible body of Nrsingh (half man and half lion). [Refer Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 6-8.]

Lord Shiva has many other names also as follows:--

1. Aashutosh—meaning one who fulfills all wishes of his devotees instantly.
2. Bhairav—meaning the Lord of Terror.
3. Bhole-naath—meaning the Lord who is simple-hearted, unpretentious, straightforward, honest, sincere, and humble in spite of being the Lord God.
4. Bhu-Dev—meaning the Lord of the earth.
5. Devaa-dhi-dev—meaning the Lord of all the Gods; the supreme God; the primordial God; the first amongst the Gods; the God who was present before the coming into being of all the other Gods.
6. Gangaa-dhar—meaning the Lord who holds the mighty river Ganges in the lock of hairs on his head.
7. Jagdish—meaning the Lord of the world, the universe.
8. Kailash—meaning the Lord who eliminates miseries and torments, restoring peace and happiness to the creature. It also means the Lord of the sacred mountain with the same name, viz. Mt. Kailash.

Symbols associated with Lord Shiva—

Shiva Lingam/Jyotirlingam—References: The Atharva Veda's (i) Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 11-12, 14 refer to the Shiva's 'Lingam' and to his 'Jyotirlingam'; (ii) Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 12.

The Atharva Veda's Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 12 gives the *names* of some of the twenty *Shiva Lingams* as follows—"Vireshwar, Rudreshwar, Ambikeshwar, Ganeshwar, Neelkanth, Gopaleshwar, Bhadreswar etc."

The *Shiva Lingam* is a gross manifestation of Shiva who himself is a divine, subtle and sublime Being. Just like the case of the rest of this creation being a visible and gross manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Supreme Being, Lord Shiva's Lingams too represents the otherwise invisible, attribute-less,

cosmic, all-pervading and the most sublime Lord Shiva's subtle form in its grosser aspect or form that is visible, and has attributes like the other grosser manifestations of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. This is one of the primary reasons why Lord Shiva is also called 'Maha-deva', the Great God, because he is none other than Brahm himself.

The Shiva's Lingam is like an icon that is normally used to stand as a unique symbol for a particular deity or God. It is an emblem of Shiva. If we look at the Lingam closely we observe that it is a cylindrical structure passing through the center of a circular girdle or ring. This structure reminds one of a wheel with the central axle. This imagery is used to indicate the fact that Shiva is the supreme transcendental Brahm around whom the whole of the creation rotates. 'Rotates' is a metaphoric way of saying that the entire creation depends upon Brahm; it is centered around Brahm; Brahm is the pivot that supports the entire edifice of creation. Just like the wheel cannot move if the axle is removed, this creation cannot survive if Brahm, the Consciousness and the Truth of creation, is removed from it. The fact that this creation is like a wheel rotating around the central axle called Brahm is endorsed in a number of Upanishads, e.g. (a) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse nos. 4, 6; Tripdvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph 3-14 (which describes the 'Sudarshan Chakra' of Vishnu); Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 6-7 (which describes the wheel or Chakra that is present in the navel and how it keeps the creature trapped in it); Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2 (which describes the Sri Chakra dedicated to Goddess Tripura who is regarded as the Mother Goddess; Surya Upanishad, verse no. 1 (describes the Sun God as the one who keeps the wheel of life and death, known as the Kaal Chakra, rotating). (b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, 6; Canto 5, verse no. 12; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.

Besides this eclectic viewpoint we also observe that a cylinder is a smooth surface that is round from all sides. It appears the same from whichever side one sees it. This signifies the fact that Brahm is uniform and even in all respects, and neither does it have any specific form and feature. Like the Lingam passing through the circular girdle around it, the entire creation too forms a ring that moves around Brahm which holds the creation together and passes through its center. Now, this 'center' also means a core, and hence this refers to the Atma, the soul, that is the pivot or the core around which life revolves in this world.

If we look further ahead and observe a potter's wheel and how the potter moulds his pots and pans on it we find that it has a striking resemblance to the Shiva Lingam. As the wheel turns the potter expertly raises the shape of his wares at its center, and the rotating potter's wheel can be treated as an apt metaphor for the way the Shiva Lingam represents the phenomenon of creation moulded from the dynamic energy of Brahm revealed as the Shakti that continuously revolves around the principal known as Brahm.

Iconographically, the Shiva Lingam has three distinct parts—the lower part fixed to the ground stands for Brahma the creator; the middle part of the wheel stand for Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation; and the upper part of the cylinder represents Rudra the concluder. These three Trinity Gods stand for the three basic and fundamental aspects of creation—birth, development and growth, and finally the end. They thus represent Brahm in its entirety.

The Shiva Lingam is called *Jyotirlingam* because it is mentioned in the Linga Puran, Chapters 17-20 that the Shiva Lingam appeared as an endless shaft of fire. And 'fire' is characterized by the virtues of light and illumination. It came to be known as the 'Linga' because all the creatures of this creation have a gross body in which their soul or their Atma lived, called the 'Linga Deha', and they reproduced

themselves with the help of the genitals, called the 'Linga'. Since only the Supreme Being has this capacity to create and then sustain his creation, the grosser form of the Lord in the form of this creation and its self-replicating creatures was symbolized in the grosser symbol of the Linga. In other word, the Lingam represents the whole creation in a miniature gross form. This icon of Brahm is called 'Shiva' Lingam because Shiva is a personified form of Brahm.

It is also believed that it is called 'Lingam' because the entire creation would collapse at the end in Brahm, the ethereal cosmic Consciousness. The phrase 'Linga Deha' literally refers to the ethereal form of the corporal body of a creature. So when the creature sheds the body, his Atma would merge with the cosmic Atma known as Parmatma. Since Lord Shiva is the Parmatma—the Supreme Being—of this creation, it is natural that his symbol would be called a Lingam. It is to emphasize the fact that one should not be misled by its outer gross structure of being merely a cylindrical structure made of stone or rock but a divine symbol of the cosmic Atma that cannot be visualized by the naked eyes.

The physical Lingam is the visible form of the invisible Linga Deha of Shiva which is the Lord's ethereal and cosmic form.

The fact that the Lingam is an image of Lord Shiva is affirmed by the Lord himself in the Atharva Veda's Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 12 where the Lord preaches about the immense symbolic metaphysical importance and signficance of the Lingam, and in paragraph nos. 14-15 when he preaches about the great many *benefits of worshipping the Shiva Lingam* which is his image, and *how to worship it*. To quote—

“verse no. 12 =[This verse emphasizes the importance and the significance of the Shiva Lingam as follows—] Even the Sun God, the Moon God, the Fire God and the Wind God (i.e. the primary Gods) are unaware of the mysteries and enigmatic glories of this Shiva-Lingam.

The self-illuminated and self-emerged or self-created Lingam extends as far as the pit of the earth known as Paataal.

This Shiva-Lingam is an image of me who am the Lord of the world. Hence, it is known as 'Vishwanaath' Lingam.

Worshipping it and paying obeisance to it is directly worshipping and paying obeisance to me.

A worshipper who offers his worship and obeisance to me, who serves me and honours me with full devotion, sincerity and faith, by offering three leaves of the Bilva tree, and then offers the auspicious rewards of such exemplary worship to me (rather than expecting any gain for himself in return for such worship or service), who wears the Bhasma (sacred ash) and the Rudraksha beads as prescribed, who has sought my shelter and has taken refuge in my holy feet, and who is an unquestioned and most committed devotee of mine—verily I say that I accept his worship and free him from the fetter represented by the endless cycle of birth and death.

Even a great sin and its evil consequences are neutralized by offering daily worship to my Shiva-Lingam, by offering libations to me (a process known as 'Abhishek') and praying to me by reading or reciting the hymns of the Rudra Skuta daily with the greatest of devotion and faith, and then drinking the water left over after the completion of worship and offering of libations to my Lingam.

Such a devotee is free from all sorrows, grief, miseries and torments. He is freed from the shackling effect of this mundane and entrapping world. [12]

“verse no. 14 = (Benefits of worshipping the Shiva Lingam—) By offering libations to my Lingam, which is my image, with the milk drawn from a Kapila cow (i.e. a cow with reddish-brown, white, or white-spotted skin) while reciting the hymns of the Rudra Sukta, a devotee can obtain purification (pardon) from the horrendous sin of killing a Brahmin.

Offering of libations with the curd made from the milk of the Kapila cow helps one to eliminate or clean the great sin caused by drinking intoxicating liquids.

Offering of libations with clarified butter made from the milk of the Kapila cow helps one to overcome the grave sin caused by stealing gold (or theft of any kind).

Offering of libations with honey helps one to overcome the horrible ignominy and sin caused by being amorous towards the wife of one's Guru (teacher and moral preceptor).

Offering of libations with white sugar helps one to overcome the sin of being cruel to others.

Offering of libations with milk and other products (as prescribed above) helps the devotee fulfill all his aspirations, desires and wishes.

By offering libations one hundred times with quantity of materials that are one hundred times more than that used for one standard routine offering (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal by weight) helps the aspirant to free himself from the fetters that shackle him to this world. [14]

“verse no. 15 = (How to worship the Shiva Lingam—) My (Shiva's) image in the form of the Shiva-Lingam should be offered worship during the time of the Aadra Nakshatra (an asterism known as Aadra), on the full moon day, on the new moon day, the Vyatipaata Yoga (the seventeenth astrological union of stars), on the occasion of eclipses (solar and lunar), and on the day of the Sakranti (the summer and winter solstice).

During these days, worship should be done by first offering libations followed by oblations. For this, the following items are to be used—sesame seeds, rice, barley, three leaves of the Bilva tree, clarified butter made from the milk of the Kapila cow, scents and fragrances, incense sticks, lighted lamp, sweets, fruit etc. Then flowers and water in cupped palms of the hands should be offered most respectfully at the end of the worship.

By offering worship and service to me with devotion and faith, the devotee obtains Sayujya Mukti (i.e. he becomes one with me).

If the worship is done with rice of quantity that is one hundred times that used for standard routine worship (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal), the worshipper obtains the abode of the Moon God known as Chandra-loka.

If equal quantity of sesame seeds (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal) is used for worship, the worshipper obtains the abode of the Vayu God (the Wind God).

If equal quantity of horse beans (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal) is used for worship, the worshipper obtains the abode of the Varun God (the Water God).

If equal quantity of barley (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal) is used for worship, the worshipper obtains the abode of the Surya God (the Sun God).

If twice the above amount of items are used for worship (i.e. if roughly 200 kilograms or 2 quintals are used), the worshipper obtains the higher heaven known as the Swarga-loka.

If four times the above quantity of items are used for offering worship to me (i.e. if roughly 400 kilograms or 4 quintals are used), the worshipper obtains the abode known as Brahma-loka, or the abode of Brahma the creator.

If worship is offered to me or my Lingam by using the items needed for such worship measuring one hundred times than the standard offerings (i.e. if roughly 100 x 100 = 10,000 kilograms or 100 quintals are used), the worshipper is freed from the jurisdiction of death, or clutches of death, as far as the Brahm-Kosha. [That is, he is freed from the fear of death till the time the creator would be born again. The word 'Kosh' means the source from which Brahma the creator was born, the point of time when Brahma was born. Refer paragraph no. 20 of this Canto 2 below.]

Since he is my devotee, he crosses over from the abode of Brahma and reaches my abode known as the Shiva-Loka that is beyond it. There is no abode or heaven better than it. He becomes free from all miseries and sorrows upon attaining it. He is freed from all fetters and encumbrances that had kept him shackled.

By worshipping me in my form as the Lingam, ascetics have attained great mystical powers. Those who do fire sacrifices (i.e. the worshippers of the sacred fire) are actually offering their obeisance to me when they offer their oblations to the sacred fire. It is me whose magnificence, holiness, eclectic glories and divine virtues are sung and lauded by the Vedas in their hymns.

It is proved beyond doubt by the great scriptures such as the Vedangas (branches of Vedas), the Upanishads, and the Itihasas (ancient mythological histories) that there is nothing besides me in this creation. Everything is me; everything is established in me; I am the foundation and basis of everything. [This is because Lord Shiva is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified. Nothing exists in this creation that is not Brahm; it is Brahm who has manifested or revealed in every single unit of creation.] [15]”

The significance of the *moon on his forehead*, and his *five heads and the ten arms*— Lord Shiva has been depicted in the Purans as having a *crescent moon* on his forehead. The moon is said to have sixteen Kalaas or phases, symbolising the sixteen Kalaas or aspects out of the total of sixty four Kalaas of the supreme Brahm. These sixteen Kalaas represent the visible world which is one fourth part of the entire creation consisting of the remaining of the Kalaas of Brahm. The visible world is called ‘one Pada’ or one leg or one aspect or Kalaa of Brahm. So, Shiva is the Lord who presides over the entire visible part of creation, and this world is his ornamentation in the sense that the Lord appears to be so beautiful if we consider the beauty of Nature as the astounding beauty and the expert craftsmanship of Shiva on display.

The moon present on Shiva’s forehead also stands for the various eclectic qualities called Kalaas that he possesses and which adorn him like the moon. Symbolically, the devotee is advised to follow the example of his chosen deity Lord Shiva and note the symbolism of the Moon on his head. These eclectic qualities should be as prominent as the moon on the head of Shiva and they should form an integral part of the character of the devotee if he wishes to place himself in the position of being called a sincere follower and worshipper of Lord Shiva. Now let us have a glimpse of these *Kalaas*. They are the various eclectic qualities or attributes that an exalted man should possess, and briefly they are the following—(i) Shraddha (faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (ii) Pran (life; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) ‘Prithivi’ (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (the mind and heart complex and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one’s self), (xiii) Mantra (the ability to give good advise, the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, logically arrive at a conclusion), (xiv) Karma (taking actions and doing deeds), (xv) Loka (worldly interactions and behaviours), and (xvi) Naam (good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory).

Reference should be made to the Chandogya Upanishad, 6/7/1-6 of Sam Veda tradition in this context.

The *five heads* of Shiva stand for the ‘Panch Vyom’ or the five forms that the sky element is said to have. According to Vedanta, the concept of the *sky* or ‘Akash’ has

many connotations. According to one interpretation, there are *five* subtle skies representing the space surrounding the five sheaths or *Koshas* present in the body of a creature. They are the sheaths that surround the Atma and are called ‘Panch Akash’. These are the following—(1) the Food Sheath called Anna Maye Kosh; (2) the Vital Air Sheath called Pran Maye Kosh; (3) the Mental Sheath called Manomaye Kosh; (4) the Intellectual Sheath called Vigyan Maye Kosh; and (5) the Bliss Sheath called Anand Maye Kosh. Refer—Mudgal Upanishad, 4/5 of the Rig Veda.

The *ten arms* of Shiva stand for the ten forms of the subtle sky element. They are the following—(1) Ghatakash—the space inside a hollow pot; (2) Mathakash—the space inside a holy building, such as a holy shrine, a monastery, an abbey etc.; (3) Hridayakash—the subtle space inside the heart; (4) Akash—the vacant or blank space above the earth; (5) Suryakash—the space of the solar system; the space around the sun, or the solar system illuminated by the light of the sun; (6) Paraakash—the space above or beyond the solar system, it is said to burn with the celestial fire; (7) Mahakash—the great sky that is aglow with divine illumination, the heaven; that space which is radiant with a divine glow; (8) Paramakash—the supreme sky beyond the Mahakash, it is said to be very magnificent and encloses everything that exists, including all the other skies; that space which is illuminated, all pervading, all encompassing and full of bliss and felicity; (9) Tattwakash—the elementary space that is at the core of the concept of space, or the space that surrounds the basic elements of creation; by natural corollary it refers to the subtle, sublime, ethereal and supreme space where the eternal, transcendental Brahm has his abode because Brahm is the cause of all the basic elements of creation; there is complete beatitude and felicity there; that space which surrounds the essential truth known as Brahm; and (10) Anatariksha—the physical space where stars are present in deep space; the intergalactic space. Besides these, there is one more space called ‘Swarga’ which means heaven or the Duloka.

These skies have been ascribed different names just to facilitate understanding, and not because any one form of sky is fundamentally different from the other. For example, the space present inside the mud-pot, called the Ghata-kash, is the same as the space present outside the body of the pot. When the pot is broken, the demarcation wall of the body of the pot is removed, and both the space inside and outside of the erstwhile pot become indistinguishably and inseparably the same. Therefore, the various names are artificial and misnomers.

To quote *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 100—“This Lord Shiva is most pure and immaculate, and as clear and clean as pure crystal¹. He has a crescent moon tucked in the lock of hairs on his head. He has five mouths, is very sober, gentle and pleasant, has ten arms and three eyes (100).

{Note—Since Lord Shiva is the patron God of Yogis or those ascetics who do Yoga, especially those who practice its exercises and rituals as propounded by Patanjali, and this Upanishads deals with Yoga, the supreme transcendental Supreme Being known as Brahm of metaphysics and Upanishads is personified here in him.}

The significance of the *serpents* wrapped around his body—The *snakes* that are wrapped around Lord Shiva show that he is beyond the power of death and poison. These coiled serpents around his body indicate the fact that he constantly reminds himself of imminent death, because serpents are very poisonous and symbolise immediate death. They also remind him about the unholy and poisonous nature of the gross world. This helps him to remain focused on his spiritual aim of self-realisation instead of being attracted by the material charms of this material world of sense objects and getting deluded by them.

The serpents also signify that Shiva is the Lord of death; he is death personified. Since he is able to wrap the serpents around his body and they cannot harm him, it

indicates the fact that he has conquered death. That is why he is called 'Mrityunjay', the conqueror of death.

Again, the coiled serpents represent the Kundalini, the coiled subtle cosmic energy center at the base of the spine which when activated can entitle the spiritual aspirant to experience a burst of stupendous spiritual energy which provides him a glimpse of his own divine powers as well as the powers of the cosmic Consciousness present inside his bosom as his Atma. This Kundalini is activated by doing numerous Yoga exercises as described in the Upanishads on the subject of Yoga.

The coiled serpents may also represent cycles of time in the macrocosm and the basic energy of life in the microcosm in the form of sexual energy.

These reptiles are very ferocious, dangerous, poisonous, and a symbol of male potency. The symbolism is that Shiva is a very potent God who can be extremely ruthless and unforgiving towards sinful creatures. He has exercised extreme self control and has 'girdled' or readied himself in preparation for enduring the greatest of hardships and sufferance for self-realisation as well as to provide the world with liberation and deliverance. The serpents warn his enemies not to fool around with him. That is also why he has fire in one of his hands. This fire signifies his ability to reduce to ashes the entire physical world consisting of falsehood and sins as well as eliminate all impurities, imperfections, faults, weaknesses and shortcomings that cripple the creature's spiritual well being.

The *Trident* of Lord Shiva is known as 'Trishul', and it represents the three Gunas, or the three natural tendencies or the three fundamental qualities that are inherent in this creation and they govern all characteristics in the living world. These three Gunas are known respectively as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna, and the Tama Guna.

The Trident is known as the 'Trishul', and is one of the most popular symbols associated with Lord Shiva. It is a weapon used by Lord Shiva for the restoration of Dharma. But the Trishul has a deeper symbolic meaning as follows—

The Trishul symbolizes the balance of the three forces of preservation, creation and destruction. It represents the three aspects of consciousness—cognition, conation and affection.

The *sound* of Shiva's *two-sided drum* represents the cosmic sound known as Naad that reverberates in the background of the cosmos. This sound is symbolically represented by the sound that is produced by uttering the word OM.

The *vehicle or mount* of Lord Shiva is the white *bull called the Nandi*—which means the cheerful one, the joyful one. The bull on which Lord Shiva rides represents virility and strength, the animal-like power and basic instincts in a man.

In Shiva temples, there is always a reclining bull placed in front of the chief shrine or just outside it, with the head turned away from the deity but the gaze fixed on it. It is interpreted as the Jivatma, the individual soul of all living being, with its animal-like nature pulling it away from God, but the Lord's grace pulling it back towards him.

Lord Shiva is often depicted in the Purans and imagery as *seated* on a tiger skin or *wears* a tiger skin. Here, the tiger represents the stupendous power of the mind.

Lord Shiva *lives* on Mount Kailas that is located in the northern side of the mighty mountain range known as the Himalayas.

Importance of having devotion for Lord Shiva (according to Tulsidas)—

Tulsidas' immortal epic story of Lord Ram, known as *Ram Charit Manas*, highly respects Lord Shiva. In it, Lord Ram, who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, has said himself that if one wishes to have 'Bhakti' (devotion) for the

Lord, then it is necessary for him to have great respect of Lord Shiva—reference: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 45; and Lanka Kand, Doha no. 2 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 7-8, till Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precedes Doha no. 3.

Tulsidas has sung the glories of Lord Shiva in his book *Kavitawali* in its Uttar Kand, verse nos. 149—164.

Mantras pertaining to Shiva—(i) The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse/paragraph no. 8 describes the great Mantra of Lord Shiva which gives the worshipper the stature equivalent to that of Lord Shiva. To quote—“The Lord (Shiva) replied, ‘You must worship the God who vanquishes death with the help of the Anushtup Chanda ‘Trayambak’ etc. (narrated above).

It has been said from the beginning that the monosyllabic word OM is a representative of the Lord (the supreme transcendental Brahm) who is universal and uniformly all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing.

Hence, those who worship the Lord with Mantra ‘OM Namaha Shivaaye’ of the Yajur Veda are able to attain the exalted stature equivalent to Lord Rudra. He is rewarded with auspiciousness. [This Mantra briefly means ‘Salutations to the Lord represented by the word OM! I bow before Lord Shiva who is this particular supreme transcendental Lord’.]

You must be fully enlightened about it. [That is, a spiritual aspirant who knows the profound import of this great Mantra uses it for offering worship to the Lord in order to attain the supreme state of enlightenment that gives him salvation and emancipation.] [8].”

(ii) The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse/paragraph nos. 2-6 describe the great Mantra of Lord Shiva in his divine form as Trayambak. The full Mantra is ‘Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushtivardhan Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamritaam’

(iii) The *Sharav Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse nos. 10, 23, 26, 33-34, describes the glories of Lord Shiva as follows—

“verse no. 10 = We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who can burn to ashes the entire world by the fierce spurt of fire emanating from the third eye located in his forehead¹, and is so gracious that he re-creates it once again after punishing it (for its sins and misdeeds by reducing it to ashes), and then offers it his protection (10).

“verse no. 23 = Lord Maheswar, the Great God (‘Ishwar’) and Lord of all the other gods, is truthful, is eternal, unchanging, steady and always omnipresent everywhere, is a (neutral and dispassionate) witness to all and everything (that is happening in this creation), is eternally blissful and happy, has no comparison or parallel in this creation, and is indescribable and incomprehensible.

The Lord or Bhagwan is also known as ‘Girish’ as he is the Lord of mountains. [This is because the symbolic abode of Shiva is said to be on the higher reaches of snow-covered Mt. Kailash. The reason for Shiva living in mountains is that he is the greatest Yogi or ascetic, and for an ascetic it is prescribed in the scriptures that he makes mountains and forests his abode. This is to help him in his meditation and contemplation or other forms of spiritual exercises. Mountains are places that give serenity, solitude, peace and tranquility to the soul. They are the natural habitat for those who wish to pursue spiritual path of meditation and contemplation because they provide the aspirant with the perfect environment that fits their spiritual needs. Besides this, the mountains are metaphors for areas on earth where the positive

energy of the consciousness is at its peak—and this is physically depicted in the form of high peaks of mountains that almost touch the sky.]

We say that the Lord lives there or anything else about the Lord only because we imagine it to be so, as it is just not possible to know about him (23).

“verse no. 26 = Everything in existence comes to an end in a regular cycle and in a sequential order when the time comes. Therefore, everything is impermanent, mortal and perishable, and hence false and illusionary. {This is because if they would have been real and truthful then they would have been permanent and immortal, as ‘truth’ never ends and it is constant.}

OM salutations! We pay our obeisance and greatest of respect to that Great Lord known as Mahadev (literally the great God or Lord) holding the ‘Shul’ (the invincible and strong spear or any sharp pointed weapon, here meaning the trident held by Shiva) who devours everything and brings them to an end. That is, Shiva is the Authority that concludes this creation.

At the same time our obeisance and greatest of respect are meant for the same Lord Maheshwar (literally the great Ishwar or God or Lord) known as Rudra (or Shiva) who is ever so merciful, gracious, benevolent and munificent on all (26).

“verse no. 33-34 = Shiva is the only truthful, eternal and imperishable entity that remains infinitely constant, steady and unchanging, that is immutable and indivisible. Except Shiva everything else is un-truth, illusionary and false.

That is why besides the other exalted God known as Vishnu, the aspirant should meditate and contemplate only upon Lord Shiva who is the Lord (like Vishnu) who can help the aspirant to break free from all the fetters that shackle him down and prevent his liberation and deliverance from this ensnaring world.

We pay our sincere obeisance and the greatest of respect to Maheshwar (the great Lord God) who provides liberation and deliverance from the formidable snare of this world which is very difficult to break free from, as well as is the Lord who devours everything in this world. [Refer verse nos. 10, 17-18, 24, 26 and 30 in this context.] (33-34).”

The *Shiva Tattva*—The essence of the Shiva principle called the Shiva Tattva has been dealt with in Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Dakshin Murti Upanishad*, verse nos. 4-5, 24, 28-30; *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 6, Canto 4, verse no. 32; *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad*, verse nos. 5-6, 12-14.

Shiva Tattva—The word ‘Tattva’ means truth, reality, essence, fundamental aspect, the primary and basic element, the real and truthful principle, while the word ‘Shiva’ stand for a host of eclectic virtues and divine glories exemplified and personified by Lord Shiva, such as the divine and grand virtues of spiritual beauty, auspiciousness, truthfulness, righteousness, nobility, dispassion, detachment, wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment etc.

Since the primary essence and the basic elementary Truth of creation that is absolute, pristine pure, uncorrupted, untainted, immutable, eternal, imperishable and universal, that is auspicious, righteous and noble, is known as Brahm, and since these virtues are undiluted, untainted and eternally truthful, since they are unchallengeable and irrefutable ‘truths and reality’ of existence, they are collectively called the ‘Shiva Principle’. Lord Shiva is the ultimate Authority and Principal of creation who personifies these virtues.

The word Shiva refers to one is not only beautiful, auspicious, holy and truthful, who is not only most enlightened, wise, self-realised and Brahm-realised, but personify or embody these virtues in his own self. That is why Shiva is the universal teacher and preacher of the great principles and tenets of metaphysics and spirituality because there is no one more competent, more knowledgeable and wiser than him. This is also the reason why he is depicted always in a state of perpetual Samadhi—the

state of perpetual meditation and contemplation, because he has tasted the nectar of eternal bliss and happiness that comes with realising the ultimate Truth of existence which fills the spiritual aspirant with an extreme sense of contentedness and ecstasy. It must be remembered that all Upanishads rely on and unequivocally expound upon one basic philosophy, and it is the tenet of 'Advaita' or 'non-duality'. They endeavour to establish by their teachings that the 'Tattva', or the fundamental essence behind everything in this living creation, no matter what its external form and quality is and what the context and circumstance are—is basically the one and the same entity that is known as pure cosmic Consciousness. Since the underlying essence is the same and it remains constant, unchanging, immutable, indivisible and universal in spite of the mind-boggling variations in which it is manifested in this visible world, since nothing can exist without this fundamental essence, and since it would outlast all known visible faces of creation that appear to be true on their face but are fundamentally flawed because they come to an end whereas 'truth' should be eternal and imperishable, it is known as 'Tattva', the great essence and fundamental 'truth' behind everything.

So, the Shiva Tattva being talked about here is the ultimate essence or Tattva that is 'Shiva' in nature. That is, the essence that is basically truthful, beautiful, auspicious, holy and divine in nature.

The main aim of all spiritual pursuit and study of the scriptures is to become aware of the supreme and irrefutable Truth that is Absolute in this creation along with the basic principles that define this Absolute Truth and form its eclectic essence. Since the concept of the Absolute Truth is too abstract to be comprehended by the mind, it has been personified as a deity or Deva. What is it? It is the eclectic, esoteric and mystical knowledge and awareness of the cosmic, universal and eternal divine Being who personifies this Truth, and who is the subject matter of all metaphysical research and spiritual practices. This Supreme Being is none other but Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. The knowledge of this Brahm is known as the Shiva Tattva—the auspicious, holy and divine essence and principle that defines and governs the enigmatic and mysterious entity known as Brahm.

It is like the case of the hidden nucleus around which the electrons move in an atom, or the atom itself which is invisible but forms the basic building block around which all the molecules are constructed, and which in turn form the basis of all material things that have come into existence in this world. If we remove the nucleus or the atom, nothing would exist though no one has actually seen either of them.

The varying ratio of the three basic qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama in a person determine his individuality, and since the chances of these qualities mixing with each other is phenomenally large, we have countless types of men with no two individuals having everything in common. But suppose a situation is brought about when these three Gunas neutralise each other, as the case was before the beginning of creation when they were present in Brahm but lay in a neutral state, it would result in the elimination of all disparities and differences seen in this world. That is, the state of non-duality, homogeneity and uniformity would be reached. All variations and changes would cease to matter—what is now would also be in the future, and it was the same in the past. This is the basis of the theory of non-duality, i.e. that what was then is present now and would be there in the future and beyond. Since only 'truth' does not change, the entity targeted by this Upanishad is this ultimate 'absolute truth' which it prefers to call the 'Shiva Tattva'.

The abode of Shiva in the body—reference: Body as an abode of Lord Shiva—(i) The Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165-168, Canto 2, verse nos. 6-10, 20, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-15, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-5, 13-16, and Canto 6, verse nos. 32-33, 47; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 50 and 53; and Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11. (ii) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto

4, verse nos. 48-59. (iii) Atharva Veda's Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 7, verse no. 4.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 50 and 53 describe Shiva's symbolic abode in the body in the Mooladhar Chakra (at the lower end of the body) and the region of the head (forehead) respectively.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Brahman 7, verse no. 4 says that when one wears the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice, called the Bhasma, on one's body, all the pores of the body become as holy as Shiva Lingams. To quote—"King Janak asked sage Yagyavalkya once again—"What are the benefits of wearing the Bhasma?"

The sage replied—"By wearing (smearing of) the Bhasma on the body, all the pores of the body from where the hair follicles emerge become de-facto Shiva Lingams. [The 'Shiva Lingam' is a symbol of Lord Shiva and is shaped like an erect cylinder which is encircled by a rounded horizontal flat platform at its base. This Shiva Lingam is consecrated in all the shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva. In the present case, by saying that each pore of the body of the wearer of Bhasma becomes a Shiva Lingam, it is meant that the whole body, the entire being of the wearer, becomes holy and sanctified, and it becomes a de-facto shrine of the Lord. It is to emphasize the profound sanctifying and purifying powers of the sacred Bhasma.]

Since the sacred Bhasma is rubbed on the whole body, and since each pore of the body has become a Shiva Lingam, it follows that the spiritual rewards of wearing the sacred Bhasma on the body is equivalent to offering the Bhasma to as many physical Shiva Lingams in temples of Lord Shiva.

All the sections of the society, whether they are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas or Shudras, get the same auspicious benefits and blessings, the same grace and benediction by wearing the sacred Bhasma as are got by offering it in a shrine of Lord Shiva' (4)."

Hymns of Lord Shiva—There are many hymns or Stotras dedicated to Lord Shiva as follows—(1) Arunchal Pancha-ratna; (2) Rudra Ashtak from Ram Charit Manas; (3) Shiv Manas Puja (mental worship of Lord Shiva); (4) Sri Shiva-aparaadha-kshamaa-stotra (hymns asking Lord Shiva's forgiveness); (5) Veda-saar-shiva-stava (the essence of Shiva as espoused in the Vedas); (6) Shiva-ashtakm (the 8 verses of Shiva's hymn); (7) Sir Panchaa-kshar Stotra (hymn describing the mystical significance of Shiva's five-lettered holy name); (8) Dwaadash-jyotirlingam Stotra (hymn dedicated to the 12 self-radiant Lingams/symbols of Shiva); (9) Shiva Taandav Stotra (hymn dedicated to the cosmic dance form of Lord Shiva); (10) Sri Pashupatya-ashtakam (the 8 verse hymn dedicated to Lord Pashupati); (11) Sri Viswanaath-ashtakam (the 8 line hymn dedicated to Lord of the world).

The hymn known as "Rudra Ashtak" appears in Gowami Tulsidas' epic narration of the divine story of Lord Ram in the Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, verses that precede Doha no. 108. The beauty of these verses is their poetry and rhyming of the verses, something that lacks in other classical works in Sanskrit. These sacred hymns are called 'Rudra Ashtak' because, one, 'Rudra' is one of the many names of Lord Shiva, and two, there are 'eight' (Ashtak) verses of two lines each, followed by a concluding Shloka.

²The churning of the ocean and emergence of the 'Kaal-Kut Visha': Once, the Gods and demons churned the ocean using Mt. Sumeru as the churner and Seshnath, the serpent, as the rope. The first produce of the vigorous churning was the 'Halahal' poisons (literally, the scalding, corrosive, biting, fierce and sharp as a saw) which started scalding all the directions of the world. The Gods and the demons decided after confabulations that only Lord Shiva can give them protection from this fear. On being propitiated and worshipped, Lord Shiva manifested himself and drank the

poison in a single mouthful—but instantly he realised that the Lord resides in his heart, and this ferocious poison would kill all the creation because the Lord is all-pervading and omnipresent. So, he just kept it in his throat for eternity. That is why his throat became blue-tinged, and his name became, inter alia, 'Neel-Kanth', the blue-throated one.

³The slaying of demon Tripura: The demon called Tarak had 3 sons—Taarkaaksha, Bindumaali and Kamal-Lochan. They did severe penances and austerities and propitiated Lord Brahma as well as Shiva, and acquired the kingdom of the 3 celestial 'Puras' or cities as a boon. After that, due to haughtiness and pride, they started great excesses and tyranny in the world. Tormented and persecuted by them, the Gods prayed to Shiva under the guidance of Vishnu. Shiva manifested himself and demolished the 3 celestial cities and the 3 demons brothers. Since then, Shiva has been called 'Tripurari' or the one who has vanquished the 3 'Puras' or cities of the above demons. In some legends it is held that the demon was called 'Tripura' and he had conquered the Gods and pilloried and tormented them. His slaying at the hands of Shiva gave him the name of Tripurari.

⁴'Kaam-Ripu' or the enemy of Kaam: Parvati was called 'Sati' in her previous life. After her death by burning in the sacrificial fire at being indignant and angry at Shiva's insult at the hands of her father Prajapati during the fire sacrifice. At the same time, the demon Tarakasur (pronounced as 'Taarkaasur') created such havoc that the Gods were extremely terrified and tormented. The demon had a boon that he can be killed by Shiva's son only—but the dilemma was that Sati had died, and after her death Shiva had sat in a trance like state of Samadhi, unwavering and oblivious of his surroundings. To get him married to Parvati so as to beget a son it was necessary to break his austerities, severe renunciation mode that his trance like posture had created. The patron God of love, cupid, lust and passion, Kamdeo, was selected and motivated for the purpose. Once, at the instant when Parvati had gone to offer her offerings of flowers to Shiva at his abode in Kailash, Kamdeo appeared at the scene, armed with an arrow made of flowers. But before he could strike, Lord Shiva regained consciousness (or awareness) and seeing him with a pulled bow, he opened his third eye in wrath, burning Kamdeo instantly to ashes. Since then, he was called 'Kamari', 'Madanripu' (i.e., slayer of Kamdeo, enemy of Kamdeo respectively) etc. Later, Kartikeya was born of the wedlock and he killed Tarkasur.

This fascinating story is narrated in detail in Tulsidas' famous epic "Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.]

Rāga Dhanāśrī

(4)

दानी कहूँ संकर-सम नाहीं ।
 दीन-दयालु दिबोई भावै, जाचक सदा सोहाहीं ॥1॥
 मारिकै मार थप्यौ जगमें, जाकी प्रथम रेख भट माहीं ।
 ता ठाकुरकौ रीझि निवाजिबौ, कह्यौ क्यों परत मो पाहीं ॥2॥
 जोग कोटि करि जो गति हरिसों, मुनि माँगत सकुचाहीं ।
 बेद-बिदित तेहि पद पुरारि-पुर, कीट पतंग समाहीं ॥3॥
 ईस उदार उमापति परिहरि, अनत जे जाचन जाहीं ।
 तुलसिदास ते मूढ माँगने, कबहुँ न पेट अघाहीं ॥4॥

(4)

dānī kahum̐ saṅkara-sama nāhīm.
 dīna-dayālu dibōṭī bhāvai, jācaka sadā sōhāhīm. 1.
 mārikai māra thapyau jagamēm, jākī prathama rēkha bhaṭa māhīm.
 tā ṭhākura kau rījhi nivājibau, kahyau kyōm̐ parata mō pāhīm. 2.
 jōga kōṭi kari jō gati harisōm, muni mām̐gata sakucāhīm.
 bēda-bidita tēhi pada purāri-pura, kīṭa pataṅga samāhīm. 3.
 īsa udāra umāpati parihari, anata jē jācana jāhīm.
 tulasidāsa tē mūr̐ha mām̐ganē, kabahum̐ na pēṭa aghāhīm. 4.

Verse no. 4—Indeed, anyone who is as generous, charitable and magnanimous as Lord Shankar (Shiva) is nowhere to be found in this world. He is a great benefactor of those who are distressed, miserable, deprived, downtrodden and humble. He is indeed very fond of giving (i.e. is very charitable and generous by natural disposition; he loves giving away to others). And therefore he likes those who seek anything from him. (1).

How can I describe the graceful and forgiving nature of a Lord who allowed Kamdeo (the patron God of lust, desire, cupid, passion), one of the most brave warriors, to live without a form (in the mind of the people) after burning him to ashes (for his demeanours, temerity and audacity of disturbing Shiva during his meditation)?

[When he was burnt for disturbing Shiva and his wife Rati pleaded with the Lord for pardoning his sin, the Lord granted her this boon by which Kamdeo did not die altogether but survived in an immortal subtle form that had no gross physical body, and in this bargain Kamdeo all-pervading and omnipresent in an invisible form.] (2).

The ultimate end or aim of the soul (which is to attain final emancipation and salvation) for which the sages and hermits strive but hesitate to request as a grant of boon from Lord Hari (Vishnu) even after doing a lot of Yoga (meditation and contemplation) is easily available even to insects and flies (who live and die) in the worldly abode of Lord Tripurari (literally the Lord of the three worlds; Shiva). [The city referred to here is Varanasi, the terrestrial abode of Shiva.]

This fact has been revealed in the Vedas. (3).

Those who are foolish enough to abandon such a generous and benevolent husband of goddess Parvati (i.e. Shiva) and go to beg or seek something elsewhere can never satisfy their hunger fully (i.e. they can never be contented and be at peace ever). (4).

(5)

बावरो रावरो नाह भवानी ।
 दानि बड़ो दिन देत दये बिनु, वेद-बड़ाई भानी ॥1॥
 निज घरकी बरबात बिलोकहु, हौ तुम परम सयानी ।
 सिबकी दर्ई संपदा देखत, श्री-सारदा सिहानी ॥2॥
 जिनके भाल लिखी लिपि मेरी, सुखकी नहीं निसानी ।
 तिन रंकनकौ नाक सँवारत, हौ आयो नकबानी ॥3॥

दुख—दीनता दुखी इनके दुख, जाचकता अकुलानी।
 यह अधिकार सौंपिये औरहिं, भीख भली मैं जानी।।4।।
 प्रेम—प्रसंसा—बिनय—ब्यंगजुत, सुनि बिधिकी बर बानी।
 तुलसी मुदित महेस मनहिं मन, जगत—मातु मुसुकानी।।5।।

(5)

bāvarō rāvarō nāha bhavānī.
 dāni barō dina dēta dayē binu, vēda-barāī bhānī. 1.
 nija gharakī barabāta bilōkahu, hau tuma parama sayānī.
 sibakī daī sampadā dēkhata, śrī-sāradā sihānī. 2.
 jinakē bhāla likhī lipi mērī, sukhakī nahīm nisānī.
 tina raṅkanakau nāka samvārata, hauṁ āyō nakabānī. 3.
 dukha-dīnatā dukhī inakē dukha, jācakatā akulānī.
 yaha adhikāra saumpiyē aurahim, bhīkha bhalī mairī jānī. 4.
 prēma-prasansā-binaya-byaṅgajuta, suni bidhikī bara bānī.
 tulasī mudita mahēsa manahim mana, jagata-mātu musukānī. 5.

Verse no. 5—[Tired of re-writing the destiny of the people because they were always pardoned by Shiva and obtained salvation and emancipation inspite of their ineligibility for it, the creator Brahma went to goddess Parvati and complained:-]

‘Oh Bhavani (Parvati)! Your husband (Shiva) has gone astray and has lost his mind. [That is, he is literally exceeding his brief because he is supposed to bring the creation to conclusion, and not to be an agent of eternity and fostering perpetual life!]

He always gives, even to those people who are not eligible to receive anything in return because they have never done any charities (i.e. anything good) in life. This violates the sanctioned regulations of the Vedas. (1).

You are very clever and wise, so take care of your household! (The wealth of the house is being gradually diminished as) Lord Shiva has been virtually squandering away the property because of his charitable nature, and even goddesses Laxmi (the patron goddess of wealth) and Saraswati (the patron goddess of learning) are (sarcastically) praising you and your rich household (because inspite of your husband giving away freely the wealth never seems to end or be depleted, and the great wonder is that even you do not object to your husband emptying the coffers of the house). (2).

Those wretched people and paupers for whom I had not destined any comfort, pleasure or happiness of any kind, I have become fed-up creating and arranging comfortable heavens for them due to the sheer madness of your husband (Shiva) and his un-restrained habit of granting boons (of eternity and salvation) to such people. (3).

The personified forms of such pitiable conditions in this world such as misery, grief, sorrows, torments and other misfortunes, as well as the accompanying tendency of begging for mercy and seeking solace and succour from such agonies, are so distressed and dismayed because they have lost their natural habitat. [This is a metaphoric way of saying that Lord Shiva grants boons of eternity, happiness and

bliss to all who pray to him, and therefore such things as torments, misfortunes, misery and pain are vanishing from the world.]

I am so fed-up with this transgression of authority and interference in my jurisdiction by Lord Shiva that I request you to please entrust this work of writing people's destiny to someone else—for, I would rather prefer begging to feed (sustain) myself than being subjected to this humiliation of being side-lined, and my authority being undermined and eroded by Shiva (who has begun writing the destinies of people). (4).

Hearing such words of Brahma that were laced with immense affection, praise, prayer and sarcasm, Lord Mahesh (Shiva) felt mentally happy and delighted, while the mother of the world goddess Parvati smiled. (5).

Rāga Rāmakālī

(6)

जाँचिये गिरिजापति कासी । जासु भवन अनिमादिक दासी ॥1॥
 औढर—दानि द्रवत पुनि थोरें । सकत न देखि दीन करजोरें ॥2॥
 सुख—संपति, मति—सुगति सुहाई । सकल सुलभ संकर—सेवकाई ॥3॥
 गये सरन आरतिकै लीन्हे । निरखि निहापल निमिषमहँ कीन्हे ॥4॥
 तुलसिदास जाचक जस गावै । बिमल भगति रघुपतिकी पावै ॥5॥

(6)

jām̐ciyē girijāpati kāsī. jāsu bhavana animādika dāsī. 1.
 auḍhara-dāni dravata puni thōrēm̐. sakata na dēkhi dīna karajōrēm̐. 2.
 sukha-sampati, mati-sugati suhā'ī. sakala sulabha saṅkara-sēvakā'ī. 3.
 gayē sarana āratikai līnhē. nirakhi nihāpala niṁṣamaham̐ kīnhē. 4.
 tulasidāsa jācaka jasa gāvai. bimala bhagati raghupatikī pāvai. 5.

Verse no. 6—One should seek (or beg, request) only from the Lord of Girija (i.e. from Shiva who is the husband of Parvati, the daughter of the king of mountains) whose abode is in Kashi (the city of Varanasi), and to whom Anima and such other Siddhis¹ are subservient and obedient like a maid-servant is to her master. (1).

Lord Shiva is a very generous giver by nature; he becomes mellowed by or yields easily to even a little bit of service. He cannot watch distressed creatures standing at his doorstep with folded hands, and so he quickly fulfils their desires as soon as possible. (2).

All kind of happiness and joys, wealth and prosperity, refined intellect and wisdom, as well as the best kind of end (i.e. death which culminates in liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) etc. are easily available by serving Lord Shiva. (3).

Those distressed and eager souls who sought his refuge or shelter were immediately accepted by him (Shiva), and they were all instantly fulfilled and their wants or desires immediately satisfied. (4).

The beggar (i.e. humble) Tulsidas also sings his glories (with the hope) that he might also be lucky enough to be bestowed with the alms (i.e. granted the boon) of devotion and love for Lord Ram. (5).

[Note—¹The eight Siddhis are the following mystical powers—(i) ‘Anima’ means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye. (ii) ‘Mahima’ is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one’s achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills. (iii) ‘Garima’ is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance. (iv) ‘Laghima’ is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence. (v) ‘Praapti’ is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired for. (vi) ‘Praakramya’ is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch that leads to triumph, glory and majesty. (vii) ‘Ishwatwa’ is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else. And (viii) ‘Vashitwa’ is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient.]

(7)

कस न दीनपर द्रवहु उमावर। दारुन बिपति हरन करुनाकर॥१॥
 बेद—पुरान कहत उदार हर। हमरि बेर कस भयेहु कृपिनतर॥२॥
 कवनि भगति कीन्ही गुननिधि द्विज। होइ प्रसन्न दीन्हेहु सिव पद निज॥३॥
 जो गति अगम महामुनि गावहिं। तब पुर कीट पंतगहु पावहिं॥४॥
 देहु काम—रिपु! राम—चरन—रति। तुलसिदास प्रभु! हरहु भेद—मति॥५॥

(7)

kasa na dīnapara dravahu umāvara. dāruna bipati harana karunākara. 1.
 bēda-purāna kahata udāra hara. hamari bēra kasa bhayēhu kṛpinatara. 2.
 kavani bhagati kīnhī gunanidhi dvija. hō'i prasanna dīnhēhu siva pada nija. 3.
 jō gati agama mahāmuni gāvahim. taba pura kīṭa pantagahu pāvahim. 4.
 dēhu kāma-ripu!rāma-carana-rati. tulasidāsa prabhu!harahu bhēda-mati. 5.

Verse no. 7—[In this verse, Tulsidas lovingly and politely admonishes Lord Shiva for delaying to attend to his prayers.] ‘Oh the dear husband of Parvati (i.e. Lord Shiva)! Why are you not becoming benevolent, benignant, kind, merciful and graceful towards this distressed and wretched (Tulsidas)? Oh the mine of mercy, graciousness and kindness! You are the one who can vanquish and eliminate the greatest of miseries, troubles and tribulations, the greatest of ordeals and concerns that torment a creature. [Then why are you not paying heed to Tulsidas’ pleadings?] (1).

The Vedas and Purans assert that Lord Har (Shiva) is enormously large-hearted and greatly magnanimous. Why then have you become so miserly and reluctant in my case? (2).

What kind of special worship had a Brahmin named Guna-Nidhi¹ done that you were so pleased with him so much so that you had bestowed him with your auspicious abode (i.e. you raised him to an exalted stature of one who has attained salvation)? (3).

The highest attainment for the soul (i.e. salvation and emancipation of the soul which is equivalent to attaining oneness with the Supreme Being), which is assumed to be difficult even by the sages and ascetics, is easily accessible to the ordinary insects and flies in your city of Kashi (or Varanasi, if they live in it and die there). (4).

Oh the enemy of Kamdeo! Give Tulsidas firm devotion for and steady faith in the holy feet of Lord Ram. Eliminate all sense of doubts and confusions and dichotomy arising out of duality that clouds his mind. (5).

[Note—¹The story of Guna-Nidhi and his liberation: A Brahmin called Gun-Nidhi was a thief. Once he went to a Shiva temple to steal the dumb-bell. Unable to reach its hight to enable him to bring it down, he mounted the Shiva-Lingam to lift him up to the proper hight. Instantly, Shiva appeared and blessed him with the boon of abode in heaven, for he said, 'people offer flowers and leaves, but you have offered your whole self. What more could you offer me and what more could I expect'. As a result, Gun-Nidhi went to heaven.]

(8)

देव बड़े, दाता बड़े, संकर बड़े भोरे।
किये दूर दुख सबनिके, जिन्ह—जिन्ह कर जोरे।।1।।
सेवा, सुमिरन, पूजिबौ, पात आखत थोरे।
दिये जगत जहँ लागि सबै, सुख, गज, रथ, घोरे।।2।।
गाँव बसत बामदेव, मैं कबहूँ न निहोरे।
अधिभौतिक बाधा भई, ते किंकर तोरे।।3।।
बेगि बोलि बलि बरजिये, करतूति कठोरे।
तुलसी दलि, रूँध्यो चहँ सठ साखि सिहोरे।।4।।

(8)

dēva barē, dātā barē, saṅkara barē bhōrē.
kiyē dūra dukha sabanikē, jinha-jinha kara jōrē. 1.
sēvā, sumirana, pūjibau, pāta ākhata thōrē.
diyē jagata jaham̐ lagi sabai, sukha, gaja, ratha, ghōrē. 2.
gām̐va basata bāmadēva, maim̐ kabahūm̐ na nihōrē.
adhibhautika bādha bha'ī, tē kiṅkara tōrē. 3.
bēgi bōli bali barajiyē, karatūti kaṭhōrē.

tulasī dali, rūm̐dhyō cahaim̐ saṭha sākhi sihōrē. 4.

Verse no. 8—Oh Shankar (Shiva)! You are a great God, a generous giver, and very simple-hearted. All those who besought your graciousness, mercy, benevolence and kindness by humbly approaching you with folded hands are blessed by you as you eliminate all their sorrows, miseries and misfortunes without exception and in an unpartisan manner. (1).

With only a few leaves of the wood-apple tree (Bel-leaves) and few grains of rice it is possible to offer service to you, worship you and also meditate upon your form (i.e. please you), and in return you bestow upon the worshipper all the objects of comfort, pleasure, majesty, pomp and grandeur in this world, such as elephants, chariots, horses etc. [These things symbolize the majestic stature fit for a king. They stand for authority, grandeur and power. Hence, you are so liberal in your habit of giving, and so easy to please that you raise an ordinary creature to the stature of a king in exchange of even a token form of worship and respect.] (2).

Oh Vamdeo (Shiva)! I live in your city (Varanasi); I have never asked you for anything. But still, unfortunately and without provocation, these servants (subjects) of yours are tormenting me like some demonic force. [Tulsidas was subjected to continuous harassment and anguish by the Pandas (priests) of Varanasi. So he asks Shiva why he is being made miserable though he had never bothered or caused any annoyance to the Lord anytime.] (3).

Therefore I beg you to summon them soon and restrain these cruel people from tormenting this innocent, humble and harmless Tulsidas, because they wish to crush this symbolic plant of Tulsi (Basil) represented by Tulsidas, and sow the Cactus tree in its stead. (4).

(9)

सिव! सिव! होइ प्रसन्न करु दाया।
 करुनामय उदार कीरति, बलि जाउँ हरहु निज माया॥१॥
 जलज-नयन, गुन-अयन, मयन-रिपु, महिमा जान न कोई।
 बिनु तव कृपा राम-पद-पंकज, सपनेहुँ भगति न होई॥२॥
 रिषय, सिद्ध, मुनि, मनुज, दनुज, सुर, अपर जीव जग माहीं।
 तव पद बिमुख न पार पाव कोउ, कलप कोटि चलि जाहीं॥३॥
 अहिभूषन, दूषन-रिपु-सेवक, देव-देव, त्रिपुरारी।
 मोह-निहार-दिवाकर संकर, सरन सोक-भयहारी॥४॥
 गिरिजा-मन-मानस-मराल, कासीस, मसान-निवासी।
 तुलसिदास हरि-चरन-कमल-बर, देहु भगति अबिनासी॥५॥

(9)

siva! siva! hō'i prasanna karu dāyā.
 karunāmaya udāra kīrati, bali jā'um̐ harahu nija māyā. 1.

jalaja-nayana, guna-ayana, mayana-ripu, mahimā jāna na kōṭi.
 binu tava kṛpā rāma-pada-paṅkaja, sapanēhumṁ bhagati na hōṭi. 2.
 riṣaya, sid'dha, muni, manuja, danuja, sura, apara jīva jaga māhīm.
 tava pada bimukha na pāra pāva kō'u, kalapa kōṭi calī jāhīm. 3.
 ahibhūṣana, dūṣana-ripu-sēvaka, dēva-dēva, tripurārī.
 mōha-nihāra-divākara saṅkara, sarana sōka-bhayahārī. 4.
 girijā-mana-mānasa-marāla, kāsisa, masāna-nivāsī.
 tulasidāsa hari-carana-kamala-bara, dēhu bhagati abināsī. 5.

Verse no. 9—Oh Shiva! Live up to your famed name of ‘Shiva’, be pleased with me, and grant your mercy, kindness, graciousness and compassion to me. You are famed for your reputation of being exceedingly merciful, compassionate, kind and gracious as well as being most magnanimous, kind-hearted, benevolent and liberal. I adore you for these virtues, and beseech you to kindly eliminate your Maya. [Since you are so kind, I beg you to spare me the anguish that the uncountable delusions create for me.] (1).

Your eyes are like the lotus flower. You possess all the imaginable eclectic virtues and the best of qualities. You are like an enemy of Kamdeo (the patron God of worldly passions). Without your grace it is not possible for anyone to either have any knowledge of your magnificent fame (i.e. your true nature and form), nor can he have any devotion in the holy feet of Lord Ram even in his dreams. (2).

Hermits, ascetics, mystics, sages, men, demons, gods and all other creatures in this world—none of them can ever cross this world which is like an endless ocean of delusions even after crores of Kalpas (i.e. even after millions of years) by remaining opposed to your holy feet (i.e. by not worshipping you). (3).

Serpents form your ornaments. [This is because Shiva wraps them around his body like one wears a garland, a necklace, armlets, head-dress etc.]

You are a servant (i.e. an ardent devotee, a faithful and obedient follower) of Lord Ram who is the slayer of demons Khar and Dushan (representing all the evils, vices, deceit, conceit, corruptions and perversions in this world).

You are the Lord of the gods, and the slayer of the demon known as Tripura. Oh Lord Shankar! You are like the real sun for the purpose of eliminating fog-like Moha (worldly delusions, attachments, infatuations, attractions, affections etc.). [Just like the heat of the sun helps to disperse fog, the Lord’s mercy is able to remove all effects of worldly delusions.]

You are the one who eliminates all the miseries, misfortunes and distresses as well as all the fears and consternations of those who have taken shelter in your hold feet. (4).

Oh Lord of Kashi (Varanasi)! [Shiva is the patron God of the city of Varanasi.] Oh the resident of the cremation grounds. [It is believed that Shiva constantly stays in the cremation ground so that he can utter the name of Lord Ram in the ears of the dead brought for cremation. This is said to provide the dead with salvation.]

Oh the royal Swan who floats majestically in the mind and heart of Parvati (his consort) which resemble the legendary fresh-water lake named Mansarovar! Please bestow upon (or give the boon of) eternal devotion to Tulsidas in the most exalted holy feet of Lord Hari (Lord Ram). (5).

[Note—The city of Varanasi is situated on latitude 25⁰ which, by Vedic calculations, is the line through which the spine of the universe runs. This bestows it with special mystical and spiritual powers, enabling it to occupy a unique place in cosmic atlas.]

Rāga Dhanāśrī

(10)

देव,
मोह—तम तरणि, हर, रुद्र, षंकर, षरण, हरण, मम षोक लोकाभिरामं ।
बाल—शशि—भाल, सुविशाल लोचन—कमल, काम ष तकोटि—लावण्य—धामं ।।1।।
कंबु—कुंदेदु—कर्पूर—विग्रह रुचिर, तरुण—रवि कोटि तनु तेज भ्राजै ।
भस्म सर्वांग अर्धांग षौलात्मजा, व्याल—नृकपाल—माला विराजै ।।2।।
मौलिसंकुल जटा—मुकुट विद्युच्छटा, तटिनि—वर—वारि हरि—चरण—पूतं ।
श्रवण कुंडल, गरल कंठ, करुणाकंद, सच्चिदानंद वंदेऽवधूतं ।।3।।
षूल—शायक—पिनाकासि—कर, षत्रु—वन—दहन इव धूमध्वज, वृषभ—यानं ।
व्याघ्र—गज—चर्म—परिधान, विज्ञान—घन, सिद्ध—सुर—मुनि—मनुज—सेव्यमानं ।।4।।
तांडवित—नृत्यपर, डमरु डिंडिम प्रवर, अशुभ इव भाति कल्याणराशी ।
महा कल्पांत ब्रह्मांड—मंडल दवन, भवन कैलास, आसीन काशी ।।5।।
तज्ञ, सर्वज्ञ, यज्ञश, अच्युत, विभो, विश्व भवदंशसंभव पुरारी ।
ब्रह्मेद्र, चंद्रार्क, वरुणाग्नि, वसु, मरुत, यम, अर्चि भवदंघ्रि सर्वाधिकारी ।।6।।
अकल, निरुपाधि, निर्गुण, निरंजन ब्रह्म, कर्म—पथमेकमज निर्विकारं ।
अखिलविग्रह, उग्ररूप, शिव, भूपसुर, सर्वगत, शर्व सर्वोपकारं ।।7।।
ज्ञान—वैराग्य, धन—धर्म, कैवल्य—सुख, सुभग सौभाग्य शिव! सानुकूलं ।
तदपि नर मूढ आरुढ संसार—पथ, भ्रमत भव, विमुख तव पादमूलं ।।8।।
नष्टमति, दुष्ट अति, कष्ट—रत, खेद—गत, दास तुलसी षंभु—शरण आया ।
देहि कामारि! श्रीराम—पद—पंकजे भक्ति अनवरत गत—भेद—माया ।।9।।

(10)

dēva,
mōha-tama taraṇi, hara, rudra, śaṅkara, śaraṇa, haraṇa, mama śōka
lōkābhirāmaṁ.
bāla-śaśi-bhāla, suviśāla lōcana-kamala, kāma śatakōṭi-lāvaṇya-dhāmaṁ. 1.
kambu-kundēndu-karpūra-vigraha rucira, taruṇa-ravi kōṭi tanu tēja bhrājai.
bhasma sarvāṅga ardhāṅga śailātma-jā, vyāla-nṛkapāla-mālā virājai. 2.
maulisankula jaṭā-mukuta vidyucchaṭā, taṭini-vāra-vāri hari-caraṇa-pūtaṁ.
śravaṇa kuṇḍala, garala kaṇṭha, karuṇākanda, saccidānanda vandēvadhūtaṁ.
3.
śūla-śāyaka-pinākāsi-kara, śutru-vana-dahana iva dhūmadhvaja, vṛṣabha-
yānaṁ.
vyāghra-gaja-carma-paridhāna, vijñāna-ghana, sid'dha-sura-muni-manuja-
sēvyamānaṁ. 4.
tāṇḍavita-nṛtyapara, ḍamaru ḍiṇḍima pravara, aśubha iva bhāti kalyāṇarāśi.

mahā kalpānta brahmāṇḍa-maṇḍala davana, bhavana kailāsa, āsīna kāśī. 5. tajña, sarvajña, yajñaśa, acyuta, vibhō, viśva bhavadanśasambhava purārī. brahmēndra, candrārka, varuṇāgri, vasu, maruta, yama, arcī bhavadaṅghri sarvādhikārī. 6.

akala, nirupādhi, nirguṇa, niraṇjana brahma, karma-pathamēkamaja nirvikāraṁ.

akhilavighraha, ugrarūpa, śiva, bhūpasura, sarvagata, śarva sarvōpakāraṁ. 7. jñāna-vairāgya, dhana-dharma, kaivalya-sukha, subhaga saubhāgya śiva! sānukūlaṁ.

tadapi nara mūḍha āruḍha sansāra-patha, bhramata bhava, vimukha tava pādamūlaṁ. 8.

naṣṭamati, duṣṭa ati, kaṣṭa-rata, khēda-gata, dāsa tulasī śambhu-śaraṇa āyā. dēhi kāmārī! śrīrāma-pada-paṅkajē bhakti anavarata gata-bhēda-māyā. 9.

Verse no. 10—Oh Lord (Shiva)! You are like a real sun to eliminate the darkness of Moha (the negative virtues of worldly attachments, attractions, infatuations, involvements and attendant delusions).

Oh Har! Oh Rudra! Oh ‘Sharanya’ (one who readily gives refuge and shelter to those who seek it)!

Oh ‘Lokabhiram’ (one who is most charming or delightful in the world)! You are the one who eliminates my sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations, who can free me from all the concerns that have overwhelmed me. The young moon of the 2nd night (of the dark fortnight) is adorning the lock of hairs on your head. Your large eyes are like the lotus flower. Your glamour and beauty resembles the one possessed by millions of Kamdeos (who is the patron God of passions and lust, and hence regarded as the most handsome God). (1).

The bright and beautiful countenance of your auspicious and glorious form (body) resembles that of a conch-shell, a lotus flower, a moon and camphor. The splendour, radiance and glory of your divine body (form) is dazzling like crores (millions) of mid-day suns shining together. Your whole body is smeared with ash (of the sacred fire).

Your consort (named Parvati or Uma), who is the daughter of Himachal (the king of the Himalayan Mountains), adorns one half of your divine form. [This form of Shiva is envisioned as having its right half like that of a male representing Shiva, and the left as a female representing Parvati. The statement also means that Parvati sits to the left of Shiva.]

Garlands of serpents and skulls are worn by you around your neck. (2).

The patted lock of glistening hairs on your head resembles a yellow-hued (or brownish) crown which is as splendid and dazzling like electric. The holy river Ganges, which has been made holy and pure by coming in contact with the divine feet of Lord Hari (because Ganges is said to have originated from Vishnu’s toes), has found its abode on your head (among the intertwined cluster of hairs which you wear as a crown)¹.

Your ears have ear-rings, the terrible poison (that emerged at the time of the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons) glistens with a bluish or purplish hue in your neck (thereby making your neck itself appear to be blue or purple in colour).

I praise and pray to the Lord, who is the root of the eclectic virtues of grace, kindness, mercy and compassion, who is a personification of the grand virtues of Sat (truth), Chit (consciousness) and Anand (bliss), and whose form is like that of an 'Avadhut' (which is the highest category for a self-realised and enlightened monk or ascetic to attain). [There are a number of Upanishads dealing with the concept of Sanyas which explain in detail the virtues of Avadhuts.] (3).

You hold a spear, a sword, an arrow and a bow in your hands. You are like a fire that can easily burn the forest represented by one's enemies. A bull is your mount. You have wrapped the hide of a tiger and an elephant around your body. You are a rich treasury of the best of knowledge, erudition and wisdom (i.e. there is no dearth of these qualities in you).

You are being faithfully and diligently served (honoured, revered and worshipped) by great Siddhas (those who have mystical powers), Gods, sages and hermits, as well as by other ordinary men. (4).

You play with and shake a beautiful tabor to produce music while performing the cosmic dance known as 'Tandav' (which is a special form of Tantrik dance). Though you appear inauspicious from your dress, external appearance, demeanours and paraphernalia that accompany you, the reality is that you are a mine of immense auspiciousness, goodness, welfare and good luck.

You turn to ashes the entire universe at the time of Dooms-day (which marks the dissolution of the world into the primordial cosmic gel). Mt. Kailash (in the lofty Himalayan ranges) is your terrestrial home, while you take your official seat in Kashi (the city of Varanasi in the Gangetic plains of India). (5).

You know the essence of the matter in this creation (i.e. you are enlightened enough to have a full grasp and knowledge of the fundamental Truth; the elementary things; the absolute reality and irrevocable truth in creation).

You are all-knowing and omniscient. You are the Lord of fire-sacrifices and other religious ceremonies and rituals. You are 'Vibhu' (one who is all-pervading, all-encompassing, uniform, almighty and eternal Lord of creation).

You always remain stable in your state; you are unchanging and unwavering; you are immutable and constant. Oh Purari (Shiva)! This whole world has emerged from you, and is a fractional part of your whole being. It is by the virtue of worshipping your holy feet that the various Gods—such as Brahma (the creator), Indra (the king of Gods), the Moon God, the Sun God, Varuna (the Water God), the Fire God, the eight Vasus (patron gods of essential wealth in creation), the forty-nine Maruts (Wind Gods) and Yam (the God of death; the God responsible for upholding the laws of Dharma; the God who determines the destination for a dead creature's soul depending upon his deeds)—have acquired their respective authorities and powers. (6).

You are the one who has no Kalaas or fractions, divisions and separate forms (because you are an eternally immutable whole).

You are the one who is neutral and indefinable because you do not have any specific attributes, virtues, qualities, forms and characteristics that can be employed to designate your state of being. You have no Gunas or specific attributes, qualities, virtues, forms and characteristic features (and therefore you are invisible and incomprehensible by the senses).

You are faultless and taintless. You are indeed the supreme Brahm personified. In this ever-changing world characterized by multifarious activities and innumerable deeds you the only one who remains constant and uniformly one.

You have no birth (because you are eternal and imperishable), and therefore you are free from any kind of shortcomings, faults, flaws, defects and corruptions that are an inherent part of all forms of births in this world. The whole world is nothing but your manifestation. In spite of your external form being very unconventional, unholy, ferocious and angry ('Ugra'), you are still, in your primary form, very auspicious, holy and divine.

You are the Lord of the Gods. You are all-pervading and omnipresent. In spite of being the slayer or annihilator of all (because you are the concluder of creation), you are the one who graciously takes good care of everyone in this world, and provide for their well-being and welfare. (7).

Oh Shiva! Those on whom you become benevolent and show grace upon can easily acquire such eclectic virtues as knowledge and wisdom, develop profound renunciation, dispassion and detachment, acquire wealth in the form of the virtues of righteousness, scrupulousness, probity and propriety, attain the bliss, the felicity and the beatitude that comes with final emancipation and salvation, and obtain good fortunes and favourable luck. In spite of all these benefits it is most regrettable and surprising that men turn away from serving your holy feet and instead prefer to wander aimlessly here and there on the difficult and hazardous path represented by this mortal world. (8).

Oh Shambhu (Shiva)! I—the wretched and miserable Tulsidas whose wisdom and intellect have decayed, become decrepit and corrupted, and who has fallen on bad times as he is surrounded by miseries, misfortunes, grief, troubles and tribulations of the gravest kind—have come poignantly to seek refuge and shelter at your holy feet.

Oh Kaamaari (the slayer of Kamdeo)! Please give me a stable, unwavering and eternal devotion in the holy feet of Lord Ram so that the delusions and doubts in my mind are destroyed (removed) for ever. (9).

[Note—¹River Ganges is called 'Hari Charan Poot', which literally means one who has born from the holy feet of Lord Hari (Vishnu):

When Lord Vishnu had assumed the dwarf mendicant form and asked king Bali for land equivalent to his three steps, the former had expanded his body so large that the entire universe was measured in just a single step. At that time, Brahma (the creator) had washed his feet and kept the water in his Kamandalu (a pot made of dried pumpkin kept by ascetics and hermits), which later emerged as the flow of the holy river Ganges. Being thus having its importance at being used to wash the Lord's feet, it was called Hari Charan Poot or the offspring of the Lord feet.]

Prayer offered to Bhairavanātha (a form of Śiva)

(11)

देव,

भीषणाकार, भैरव, भयंकर, भूत-प्रेत-प्रमथाधिपति, विपति-हर्ता ।

मोह-मूषक-मार्जार, संसार-भय-हरण, तारण-तरण, अभय-कर्ता ॥१॥

अतुल बल, बिपुल, विस्तार, विग्रह गौर, अमल अति धवल धरणीधरामं ।
 षिरसि संकुलित-कल-जूट पिंगलजटा, पटल शत-कोटि-विद्युच्छटाभं ।।2।।
 भ्राज विबुधापगा आप पावन परम, मौलि-मालेव षोभा विचित्रं ।
 ललित लल्लाटपर राज रजनीश कल, कलाधर, नौमि हर धनद-मित्रं ।।3।।
 इंदु-पावक-भानु-नयन, मर्दन-मयन, गुण-अयन, ज्ञान-विज्ञान-रूपं ।
 रमण-गिरिजा, भवन भूधराधिप सदा, श्रवण कुंडल, वदन छवि अनूपं ।।4।।
 चर्म-असि-शूल-धर, डमरु-शर-चाप-कर, यान वृषभेश, करुणा-निधानं ।
 जरत सुर-असुर, नरलोक षोकाकुलं, मृदुल चित, अजित, कृत गरलपानं ।।5।।
 भस्म तनु-भूषणं व्याघ्र-चर्माम्बरं, उरग-नर-मौलि उर मालधारी ।
 डाकिनी, षाकिनी, खेचरं, भूचरं, यंत्र-मंत्र-भंजन, प्रबल कल्मषारी ।।6।।
 काल-अतिकाल, कलिकाल-व्यालादि-खग, त्रिपुर-मर्दन, भीम-कर्म भारी ।
 सकल लोकान्त-कल्पान्तपूलाग्रकृत दिग्गजाव्यक्त-गुण नृत्यकारी ।।7।।
 पाप-संताप-घनघोर संसृति दीन, भ्रमत जग योनि नहिं कोपि त्राता ।
 पाहि भैरव-रूप राम-रूपी रुद्र, बंधु, गुरु, जनक, जननी, विधाता ।।8।।
 यस्य गुण-गण गणति विमल मति षारदा, निगम नारद-प्रमुख ब्रह्मचारी ।
 षेष, सर्वेश, आसीन आनंदवन, दास तुलसी प्रणत-त्रासहारी ।।9।।

(11)

dēva,
 bhīṣaṇākāra, bhairava, bhayaṅkara, bhūta-prēta-pramathādhipati, vipati-
 hatrtā.
 mōha-mūṣaka-mārjāra, sansāra-bhaya-haraṇa, tāraṇa-taraṇa, abhaya-katrtā.
 1.
 atula bala, bipula, vistāra, vighraha gaura, amala ati dhavala
 dharanīdharābhaṁ.
 śirasi saṅkulita-kala-jūṭa piṅgalajaṭā, paṭala śata-kōṭi-vidyucchaṭābhaṁ. 2.
 bhrāja vibudhāpagā āpa pāvana parama, mauli-mālēva śōbhā vicitraṁ.
 lalita lallāṭapara rāja rajanīśa kala, kalādhara, naumi hara dhanada-mitraṁ. 3.
 indu-pāvaka-bhānu-nayana, mardana-mayana, guṇa-ayana, jñāna-vijñāna-
 rūpaṁ.
 ramaṇa-girijā, bhavana bhūdharādhipa sadā, śravaṇa kaṁuḍala, vadana chavi
 anūpaṁ. 4.
 carma-asi-śūla-dhara, ḍamaru-śara-cāpa-kara, yāna vṛṣabhēśa, karuṇā-
 nidhānaṁ.
 jarata sura-asura, naralōka śōkākulaṁ, mṛdula cita, ajita, kṛta garalapānaṁ.
 5.
 bhasma tanu-bhūṣaṇaṁ vyāghra-carmāmbaraṁ, uraga-nara-mauli ura
 māladhārī.
 Ḍākinī, śākinī, khēcaraṁ, bhūcaraṁ, yantra-mantra-bhañjana, prabala
 kalmaṣārī. 6.
 kāla-atikāla, kalikāla-vyālādi-khaga, tripura-mardana, bhīma-karma bhārī.
 sakala lōkānta-kalpāntaśūlāgrakṛta diggajāvyakta-guṇa nṛtyakārī. 7.
 pāpa-santāpa-ghanaghōra sansṛti dīna, bhramata jaga yōni nahiṁ kōpi trātā.
 pāhi bhairava-rūpa rāma-rūpī rudra, bandhu, guru, janaka, janani, vidhātā. 8.
 yasya guṇa-gaṇa gaṇati vimala mati śāradā, nigama nārada-pramukha

brahmacārī.

śēṣa, sarvēṣa, āsīna ānandavana, dāsa tulasī praṇata-trāsahārī. 9.

Verse no. 11—Oh Bhairav! You have a colossus form. You look terrible and ferocious. You are the Lord of ghosts, spirits, phantoms and other similar followers of Lord Shiva. You are the remover of all sorts of troubles, miseries, concerns and misfortunes. For the rat-like negative qualities of delusions and attachments you are like a cat.

You are the remover of the fear of this world characteristic by the cycle of endless births and deaths (and their accompanying horrors). You provide liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to all the creatures, and at the same time you are an embodiment of these virtues. You bestow fearlessness to all (your devotees). (1).

Your strength and powers are immeasurable and incomparable. Your colossus form is of a fair complexion, is holy and pure, is bright and glorious, and its radiance resembles that of Shesh-Nath (the legendary serpent who holds the earth on its hoods). The crown of matted hairs on your head—which is yellowish or brownish in colour, and splendorous like 100 crores (10 million) streaks of lightening shining simultaneously—looks exceptionally magnificent. (2).

The most pure and holy river of the Gods, known as Ganges, which has a mysterious and enchanting beauty, swirls around your head and adorns it like a garland wrapped around it. The position of the beautiful crescent moon on your magnificent forehead looks astoundingly charming and beautiful. I bow my head in reverence to such a Shiva who is a friend of Kuber (the treasurer of Gods). (3).

The moon, the fire and the sun are your (three) eyes. You are the crusher or vanquisher of Kamdeo (the God of passions and lust).

You are a treasury of eclectic virtues, noble qualities, highest wisdom, truthful knowledge and metaphysical science.

You move around in the company of (your consort) Parvati, and Mt. Kailash, which is the chief and most important among the mountains, is your permanent abode.

You have large ear-rings in your ears, and the beauteous countenance of your face is most bewitching. (4).

You are armed with a shield, a sword and a spear. You also hold in your hands a tabor, an arrow and a bow. A bull is your mount. You are a treasury of mercy, compassion and kindness. This is evident from the fact that when the scalding hot and most terrible poison emerged from the ocean (at the time of its churning in some ancient time), and its heat and corrosiveness was scorching the gods, the demons and all the creatures of this world, you were so moved by their plight, distress and agony that you had immediately gulped it without a second thought. (5).

The ash (from the sacrificial fire) is the ornament of your body (i.e. your whole body is smeared with it).

You are attired in a leopard skin. You are wearing a garland of serpents and skulls (around your neck and) on your chest.

You are the destroyer of female hobgoblins, the ghosts, the Khechars (those evil spirits who move in the sky) and the Bhuchars (terrestrial evil spirits), besides the

malignant effects of evil magical charms known as Yantras, and similar malignant use of Mantras. You destroy huge sins instantly. (6).

You are the Mahakaal (the 'great Kaal' or 'the supreme God of death' personified) who causes even Kaal (the 'death god') to die. For the present age known as Kaliyug which is as horrifying as venomous serpents, you act like Garud (the legendary eagle who feeds on serpents, and who is a vehicle of Lord Vishnu).

You are the slayer of the demon known as Tripurasur, and you have done many other great deeds which are very formidable and awe-inspiring. At the time of the great Dooms-day, when the whole universe is being annihilated, you are able to pierce (kill, conquer, trounce) even those who are most brave, valiant and courageous ('Diggajs') with the point of your trident, become emotionally neutral and dispassionate, and dance as if you are in a state of extreme trance. [This cosmic dance of destruction is known as Tandava Nritya.] (7).

I (Tulsidas) am moving endlessly in this horrifying mortal world full of sins, pains, miseries and torments in a circle consisting of endless cycles of births and deaths which has made me take births for a record number of eighty-four lakh times, and am therefore immensely distressed, dismayed and horrified at the prospect of having to undergo this torture once again. I am feeling extremely wretched, hapless and helpless as I find there is no one to provide me with salvation and deliverance.

Oh Bhairav! Oh Rudra who is a personification of Lord Ram! For me you are a friend, a Guru (moral preceptor, guide and teacher), a parent and the Vidhata (the creator who decides destiny). Please save me; please protect me. (8).

Tulsidas says that Lord Shiva, whose virtues are always being sung by Saraswati (the goddess of wisdom and speech), Vedas, sage Narad and other wise ones who have profound wisdom and are well-steeped in the knowledge of the supreme Brahm, and who bestows freedom from all fears to his devotees, is present in Kashi (the holy city of Varanasi) which is much like a forest of joys and happiness known as 'Anand Van'. (9).

(12)

सदा—

षंकरं, षंप्रदं, सज्जानानंददं, षैल-कन्या-वरं, परमरम्यं ।

काम-मद-मोचनं, तामरस-लोचनं, वामदेवं भजे भावगम्यं ।।1।।

कंबु-कुंदेंदु-कर्पूर-गौरं षिवं, सुन्दरं, सच्चिदानन्दकंदं ।

सिद्ध-सनकादि-योगींद्र-वृंदारका, विष्णु-विधि-वन्द्य चरणारविंदं ।।2।।

ब्रह्म-कुल-वल्लभं, सुलभमतिदुर्लभं, विकटवेषं, विभुं वेदपारं ।

नौमि करुणाकरं, गरल-गंगाधरं, निर्मलं, निर्गुणं, निर्विकारं ।।3।।

लोकनाथं, षोक-शूल-निर्मूलिनं, षूलिनं, मोह-तम-भूरि भानुं ।

कालकालं, कलातीतमजरं हरं, कठिन-कलिकाल-कानन-कृशानुं ।।4।।

तज्ज्ञमज्ञान-पाथोधि-घटसंभवं, सर्वगं, सर्वसौभाग्यमूलं ।

प्रचुर-भव-भंजनं, प्रणत-जन-रंजनं, दास तुलसी षरण सानुकूलं ।।5।।

(12)

sadā-

śaṅkaraṁ, śampradaṁ, sajjānānandadaṁ, śaila-kan'yā-varaṁ,
paramaramyaṁ.

kāma-mada-mōcanaṁ, tāmarasa-lōcanaṁ, vāmadēvaṁ bhajē bhāvagamyaṁ.

1.

kambu-kundēdu-karpūra-gauraṁ śivaṁ, sundaraṁ, saccidānandakandaṁ.

sid'dha-sanakādi-yōgīndra-vṛndārakā, viṣṇu-vidhi-vandya caraṇāravindaṁ. 2.

brahma-kula-vallabhaṁ, sulabhamatidurlabhaṁ, vikaṭavēṣaṁ, vibhaṁ
vēdapāraṁ.

naumi karuṇākaraṁ, garala-gaṅgādharaṁ, nirmalaṁ, nirguṇaṁ, nirvikāraṁ.

3.

lōkanāthaṁ, śōka-śūla-nirmūlinaṁ, śūlinaṁ, mōha-tama-bhūri bhānum.

kālakālaṁ, kalātītamajaraṁ haraṁ, kaṭhina-kalikāla-kānana-kṛśānum. 4.

tajñamajñāna-pāthōdhi-ghaṭasambhavaṁ, sarvagaṁ, sarvasaubhāgyamūlaṁ.

pracura-bhava-bhañjanaṁ, praṇata-jana-rañjanaṁ, dāsa tulasī śaraṇa

sānukūlaṁ. 5.

Verse no. 12—I always worship the Lord Vamdeo who is also known as Shankar because he spreads auspiciousness and all round happiness and good fortunes everywhere around. He does good to all, is the bestower of welfare and happiness, gives joys to saints, is the husband of the daughter of Himachal (i.e. Parvati), is most charming and attractive, is the crusher of the pride, vanity and haughtiness of Kamdeo (the God of passion and lust), is lotus-eyed, and is attainable only by devotion. (1).

His body (skin; countenance) is smooth (wrinkle-free, radiant, glorious, healthy and well-toned) like a conch-shell, the lily flower, the full moon, and camphor. It is soft and delicate, is comfortably cool (i.e. is not 'hot' in the sense that it is not agitated and aggressive, it does not inspire fear or repulsion), is fair in complexion (due to the ash being smeared all over it), and it effuses a fragrant and sweet aroma (to indicate its holiness and divinity).

The Lord is a personification (embodiment) of the virtues of auspiciousness and all round welfare as well as of (spiritual) beauty.

He is like a tuber-root or treasury of the glorious virtues of Sat (truth), Chit (consciousness) and Anand (bliss). Such acclaimed ones as the various Siddhas (those who have acquired mystical powers; the mystics), sages such as Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan and Sanatkumar, ascetics such as Yugiraj (great ascetics), the different Gods, Lords Vishnu (the sustainer of creation) and Brahma (the creator of the visible world)—all of them worship and pray at the holy feet of the Lord (Shiva). (2).

He loves and shows respects to the Brahmins (i.e. those who have a high birth in the sense that they are learned, wise and enlightened). He is easily accessible to saints and those with a pure heart, and is most un-attainable by those who are wicked and pervert.

His form is very formidable, fearsome and awe-inspiring. He is 'Vibho' as he is eternal, omnipresent, all-pervading and all-powerful.

He is so exalted and sublime that he is even beyond the reach (understanding) of the Vedas. He is a mine of kindness, mercy, compassion and grace. He is the one who bears the ferocious poison (in his throat) as well as the holy river Ganges (on his head) simultaneously.

I bow my head in reverence to pay my obeisance to this Lord (Shiva) who is immaculate and pristine pure, who is without any attribute and untainted by one or the other Gunas (qualities that are characteristic of this mortal world full of corruptions and impurities), and who is absolutely taintless, flawless, faultless and without any trace of corruptions. (3).

He is the Lord of all the worlds. He renders sorrows and agonies in vain (futile, harmless and ineffective).

He bears (holds) a trident. He is like a sun for the purpose of destroying the (spiritual) darkness represented by Moha (delusions; worldly entanglements, attractions and attachments). He is the death of 'Death' itself. He is beyond the reach and purview of time (i.e. he is imperishable, infinite, eternal and constant). He does not become old and decrepit (from diseases or age because he is eternal, steady and imperishable).

He removes a creature (i.e. provides liberation and deliverance) from being perpetually trapped in the never-ending cycle of arrival (birth) in and departure (death) from this mortal world. And he is like the wild-fire for the purpose of burning (getting rid of; eliminating; clearing) the dense forest represented by the present dark era known as Kaliyug. (4).

This Tulsidas takes the refuge and shelter at the holy feet of Lord Shiva who is well versed and enlightened in the ultimate essence and truth of everything in existence, who is like sage Agastya (pāthōdhi-ghaṭasambhavaṁ)¹ as far as soaking the deep sea of ignorance is concerned, who is all-pervading and omnipresent as well as all-knowing and omniscient, who is like a root from which all good fortunes and auspicious spring forth, who is the destroyer of the vast and endless world of births and deaths, who gives happiness and joys to those who seek his refuge and shelter, and who is always benevolent, gracious, kind and favourable towards such people. (5).

[¹'pāthōdhi-ghaṭasambhavaṁ': There lived a Sandpiper (a type of bird) couple by the sea. The former's eggs were regularly washed away by the latter; so anguished and indignant at the sea's behaviour, they started dropping sand particles in the sea in order to fill it. Sage Agastya passed that way, and he was moved with pity and compassion at the miserable condition and frustration of the Sandpiper couple. As a punishment, he invoked the great Tarak Mantra 'Om Ram' three times and gulped down the whole ocean in a draught—not a drop was left. All the marine ecology and life went topsy-turvy, so the Gods prayed to him to calm down and reinstate the equilibrium of nature. Then, sage Agastya restored the ocean water in the form of urine; that is why, the ocean is salty and un-potable.

This incident is also referred to in verse no. 247, stanza no. 3 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.]

(13)

सेवहु सिव-चरन-सरोज-रेनु । कल्यान-अखिल-प्रद कामधेनु ॥1॥
 कर्पूर-गौर, करुना-उदार । संसार-सार, भुजगेन्द्र-हार ॥2॥
 सुख-जन्मभमि, महिमा अपार । निर्गुन, गुननायक, निराकार ॥3॥
 त्रय नयन, मयन-दर्शन महेश । अहंकार-निहार-उदित दिनेस ॥4॥
 बर बाल निसाकर मौलि भ्राज । त्रैलोक-सोकहर प्रमथराज ॥5॥
 जिन्हकहँ बिधि सुगति न लिखी भाल । तिन्हकी गति कासीपति कृपाल ॥6॥
 उपकारी कोऽपर हर-समान । सुर-असुर जरत कृत गरल पान ॥7॥
 बहु कल्प उपायन करि अनेक । बिनु संभु-कृपा नहिं भव-बिबेक ॥8॥
 बिग्यान-भवन, गिरिसुता-रमन । कह तुलसिदास मम त्रास-समन ॥9॥

(13)

sēvahu siva-carana-sarōja-rēnu. kalyāna-akhila-prada kāmadhēnu. 1.
 karpūra-gaura, karunā-udāra. sansāra-sāra, bhujagēndra-hāra. 2.
 sukha-janmabhami, mahimā apāra. nirguna, gunanāyaka, nirākāra. 3.
 traya nayana, mayana-darmana mahēsa. ahamkāra-nihāra-udita dinēsa. 4.
 bara bāla nisākara mauli bhrāja. trailōka-sōkahara pramatharāja. 5.
 jinhakaham' bidhi sugati na likhī bhāla. tinhakī gati kāsīpati kṛpāla. 6.
 upakārī kōpara hara-samāna. sura-asura jarata kṛta garala pāna. 7.
 bahu kalpa upāyana kari anēka. binu sambhu-kṛpā nahim bhava-bibēka. 8.
 bigyāna-bhavana, girisutā-ramana. kaha tulasidāsa mama trāsa-samana. 9.

Verse no. 13—[Tulsidas advises the creatures as follows—] ‘One should worship with great devotion the dust of the holy lotus-like feet of Lord Shiva which is a provider of all auspiciousness and welfares, and fulfils all desires like a Kamdhenu cow.’ (1).

Lord Shiva is fair complexioned like camphor. He is very generous in showing mercy, compassion and graciousness. He is like the sublime entity known as the Atma (the pure conscious soul; the essence and the only truth; the only entity of worth; the life and vitality) in this world that is otherwise worthless, gross, soul-less, meaningless, lifeless and inane.

He wears the legendary serpent known as Vasuki, the king of serpents, like a garland (around his neck). (2).

He is the ‘mother-land’ of all bliss, happiness and joy (i.e. all these virtues have their origin in him; he is the one from whom they emerge and then spread in this world; he is the fountainhead of these virtues).

His fame, majesty and glory are fathomless and infinite.

He is beyond the purview of the three Gunas (such as Satvik, Rajsik and Tamsik). He is in fact the Lord of all types of virtues and qualities (good or bad). And he is formless and without attributes. (3).

He has three eyes. Lord Mahesh (Shiva) is the one who had crushed the ego, the pride and the vanity of Mardan (Kamdeo), and is therefore like a sun that can destroy or

eliminate the mist of ego, pride, vanity, haughtiness and arrogance. [The mist disappears on the appearance of the sun, so do pride and vanity that disappear in the presence of Shiva.] (4).

A young (nascent) moon looks glorious on his forehead. [This refers to the crescent moon of the second night after the new moon.]

He is the eliminator of the sorrows and miseries of the three worlds. [The three worlds are the terrestrial world, the heavens, and the nether world.]

He is like a King for his subject or followers. (5).

For those whose destiny written by the creator contains nothing that is worth looking forward to, nothing that is auspicious and joyful, Lord Shiva is their only destiny (i.e. Shiva is their only refuge and shelter).

By the Lord's blessings, graciousness and kindness, they also achieve emancipation and salvation. (6).

Who is more generous, kind, benevolent and merciful than Lord Har (Shiva) who had drunk the venomous poison (that was produced at the time of legendary churning of the ocean) to protect the gods and demons from being burnt, scalded and corroded by its ferocity? (7).

No matter what one tries, and no matter how many attempts and formulas are employed for numerous Kalpas (eras, period of time), one would not realise and understand the real and true nature of the world without the blessings, grace and kindness of Shiva. [That is, one cannot get wisdom, become self-realised and attainment enlightenment without the Lord's grace.] (8).

Tulsidas pleads with Lord Shiva as follows—'Oh the one who is very dear to the daughter of Giri (the king of mountains)! [Here it refers to Parvati whose divine husband is Shiva.]

You are an abode (treasury) of Vigyan (i.e. knowledge, especially metaphysical, of the highest order). You are the only one who can remove all my fears (including the ones arising out of ignorance and delusions).' (9).

(14)

देखो देखो, बन बन्यो आजु उमाकंत । मानों देखन तुमहिं आई रितु बसंत ।। 1 ।।
 जनु तनुदुति चंपक-कुसुम-माल । बर बसन नील नूतन तमाल ।। 2 ।।
 कल कदलि जंघ, पद कमल लाल । सूचत कटि केहरि, गति मराल ।। 3 ।।
 भूषन प्रसून बहु बिबिध रंग । नूपुर किंकिनि कलरव बिहंग ।। 4 ।।
 कर नवल बकुल-पल्लव रसाल । श्रीफल कुच, कंचुकि लता-जाल ।। 5 ।।
 आनन सरोज, कच मधुप गुंज । लोचन बिसाल नव नील कंज ।। 6 ।।
 पिक बचन चरित बर बहिं कीर । सित सुमन हास, लीला समीर ।। 7 ।।
 कह तुलसिदास सुनु सिव सुजान । उर बसि प्रपंच रचे पंचबान ।। 8 ।।
 करि कृपा हरिय भ्रम-फंद काम । जेहि हृदय बसहिं सुखरासि राम ।। 9 ।।

(14)

dēkhō dēkhō, bana ban'yō āju umākanta. mānōm dēkhana tumahim ā'ī ritu
 basanta. 1.
 janu tanuduti campaka-kusuma-māla. bara basana nīla nūtana tamāla. 2.
 kala kadali jaṅgha, pada kamala lāla. sūcata kaṭi kēhari, gati marāla. 3.
 bhūṣana prasūna bahu bibidha raṅga. nūpura kiṅkini kalarava bihaṅga. 4.
 kara navala bakula-pallava rasāla. śrīphala kuca, kaṇcuki latā-jāla. 5.
 ānana sarōja, kaca madhupa gaṁuja. lōcana bisāla nava nīla kaṇja. 6.
 pika bacana carita bara bar'hi kīra. sita sumana hāsa, līlā samīra. 7.
 kaha tulasidāsa sunu siva sujāna. ura basi prapaṇca racē paṇcabāna. 8.
 kari kṛpā hariya bhrama-phanda kāma. jēhi hṛdaya basahim sukhārāsi rāma.
 9.

Verse no. 14—[Tulsidas imagines Shiva to be a forest, and then describes the beauty of Nature using this metaphor as follows:-] ‘Look, the beloved Lord of Uma (i.e. Lord Shiva)! Today you have metaphorically assumed the form of a dense forest. Parvati, who stays as your other-half by your side, appears to be the spring season which has arrived to meet (see) you. (1).

The radiance, shine and majesty of your body is akin to a garland of Magnolia (Champa) flowers, while the beautiful dark-blue attire that you wear is like new leaves of the Catechu (Tamal) tree. [Here, the ‘dark-blue colour of the attire’ refers to the sky that is wrapped around the mendicant Shiva and worn by him as a cloth.] (2).

Your thighs are like the smooth stem of the plantain (banana) tree, your feet (soles) are like the red-hued lotus flower, while the thin waist reminds one of the lion, and your attractive and majestic gait reminds one of a swan. (3).

Many coloured flowers that adorn the verdant forests are your ornaments, while the Nupur (anklet with tiny bells) and Kinkini (bracelet with tiny bells) are represented by the sweet chirping sound of birds (hopping around and playing merrily in these forests). (4).

Your hands are represented by the leaves of Molsiri (a tree called Ninsops dengi whose flowers are very fragrant; also called Bakul) and Mango trees, the breast (chest) by the fruit of the plum-tree, and the vest by the creepers that cover the numerous trees in the forest. (5).

Your face is like a lotus, hairs are like the (black) bumble-bee, and large eyes are like the petals of a new blue-tinged lotus. (6).

Your sweet voice is like that of a Cuckoo; your virtuous characters are like the peacock and the parrot; your bewitching smile is like a white flower (lily); and your activities are like the cool, fragrant and slow breeze that blows in a forest. (7).’

Tulsidas says, ‘Oh the most wise and enlightened Shiva! Kamdeo (lust, desire, lasciviousness, passions etc.) resides in my heart and creates a lot of mischief for me. (8).

Please be kind to cut down this deluding and ensnaring trap created by Kaamdeo so that Lord Ram, who represents eternal spiritual bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity, can reside in my heart. (9).’

Prayer offered to the Goddess

Rāga Mārū

(15)

दुसह दोष-दुख दलनि, करु देवि दाया ।
 विश्व-मूलाऽसि, जन-सानुकूलाऽसि, कर षूलधारिणि महामूलमाया ॥1॥
 तडित गर्भाग सर्वांग सुन्दर लसत, दिव्य पट भव्य भूषण विराजै ।
 बालमृग-मंजुखंजन-विलोचनि, चन्द्रवदनि लखि कोटि रतिमार लाजै ॥2॥
 रूप-सुख-शील-सीमाऽसि, भीमाऽसि, रामाऽसि, वामाऽसि वर बुद्धिबानी ।
 छमुख-हेरम्ब-अंबासि, जगदंबिके, षंभु-जायासि जय जय भवानी ॥3॥
 चंड-भुजदंड-खंडनि, बिहंडनि महिष, मुंड-मद-भंग कर अंग तोरे ।
 षुंभ निःशुंभ कुम्भीशरण केशरिणि, क्रोध वारीष अरि-वृन्द बोरे ॥4॥
 निगम-आगम-अगम गुर्वि! तव गुन-कथन, उर्विधर करत जेहि सहसजीहा ।
 देहि मा, मोहि पन प्रेम यह नेम निज, राम घनश्याम तुलसी पपीहा ॥5॥

(15)

dusaha dōṣa-dukha dalani, karu dēvi dāyā.
 viśva-mūlāśi, jana-sānukūlāśi, kara śūladhāriṇi mahāmūlamāyā. 1.
 taḍita garbhāṅga sarvāṅga sundara lasata, divya paṭa bhavya bhūṣaṇa
 virājaiṁ.
 bālamṛga-manjukhaṇjana-vilōcani, candravadani lakhi kōṭi ratimāra lājaiṁ. 2.
 rūpa-sukha-śīla-sīmāśi, bhīmāśi, rāmāśi, vāmāśi vara bud'dhibānī.
 chamukha-hēramba-ambāsi, jagadambikē, śambhu-jāyāsi jaya jaya bhavānī.
 3.
 caṇḍa-bhujadaṇḍa-khaṇḍani, bihaṇḍani mahiṣa, maṁuḍa-mada-bhaṅga kara
 aṅga tōrē.
 śumbha niḥśumbha kumbhīśa raṇa kēśariṇi, krōdha vārīṣa ari-vṛnda bōrē. 4.
 nigama-āgama-agama gurvi! tava guna-kathana, urvidhara karata jēhi
 sahasajihā.
 dēhi mā, mōhi pana prēma yaha nēma nija, rāma ghanaśyāma tulasī papihā.
 5.

Verse no. 15—‘Oh Goddess! You are the one who vanquishes horrifying sorrows and immeasurable faults; have mercy on me. You are the fount (i.e. the place of origin) of

the entire creation, are always benevolent, kind and gracious towards your devotees, bear the trident to crush miscreants and rascals, and are the basic cause and the primordial Nature from which the creation has emerged. (1).

All the parts of your glamorous (radiant, beautiful) body are shining and glowing like electric. Divine clothes and beautiful ornaments look magnificent on them. Your eyes are as beautiful as those of a fawn and Khanjan (a bird seen between fall and winter), and the face is like a full moon. Millions of Ratis and Kamdeos feel ashamed and lose their sense of pride (at being the most beautiful and charming in creation) when they compare themselves with you (i.e. your beauty, majesty, magnificence, charm, grandeur and glamour). (2).

You are a benchmark and an embodiment of the grand virtues of charm, beauty, glamour and majesty, as well as of happiness and joys, along with the possessing noble characters and high quality of dignity, decorum, modesty and propriety. For the wicked you assume a highly ferocious form (e.g. Kali, Durga). It is you who has manifested in the form of Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and the divine consort of Vishnu), Parvati (the divine consort of Shiva), and the most wise Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and the divine consort of Brahma). Oh Mother of the World! You are the mother of Kartikeya and Ganesh, and wife of Lord Shiva. Oh Bhavani! Glory to you! Cheers for you! Hail! (3).

You had broken the arms of the demon Chand (and hence known as Chandi), had slayed another demon Mahisasur (in your incarnation as Durga), and had broken every part of the body of the demon known as Mund by destroying (crushing) his false sense of pride, vanity, arrogance and haughtiness. For the furious, wild elephant-like demons known as Shumbh and Nishumbh you were like the lioness in a battle-field. You had drowned and completely annihilated uncountable hordes of enemies in the un-forgiving ocean of your anger and wrath. (4).

The Vedas, other scriptures and a thousand-tongued serpent known as Sesh-Nath praise and sing your glories continuously, but still they find it difficult to fathom them and find an end of them. Oh mother! Bless this Tulsidas with the same devotion, the attachment and the same affection for Lord Ram that the Papiha (sparrow-hawk) has for the dark rain-bearing clouds. [The bird keeps its sight fixed on the cloud and drinks only the rain water for its sustenance. It thinks of nothing else.] (5).

Rāga Rāmakālī

(16)

जय जय जगजननि देवि, सुर-नर-मुनि-असुर-सेवि,
 भुक्ति-मुक्ति-दायिनि, भय-हरणि कालिका ।
 मंगल-मुद-सिद्धि-सदनि, पर्वशर्वरीश-वदनि,
 ताप-तिमिर तरुण तरणि-किरणमालिका ।। १ ।।
 वर्म-चर्म कर कृपाण, षूल-शेल-धनुषबाण,
 धरणि, दलनि दानव-दल, रण-करालिका ।
 पूतना-पिशाच-प्रेत-डाकिनी-शाकिनि, समेत,

भूत — ग्रह — बेताल — खग — मृगालि — जालिका ।। 2 ।।
 जय महेश—भामिनी, अनेक—रूप—नामिनी,
 समस्त—लोक—स्वामिनी, हिमशैल—बालिका ।
 रघुपति—पद परम प्रेम, तुलसी यह अचल नेम,
 देहु है प्रसन्न पाहि प्रणत—पालिका ।। 3 ।।

(16)

jaya jaya jagajanani dēvi, sura-nara-muni-asura-sēvi,
 bhukti-mukti-dāyini, bhaya-haraṇi kālīkā.
 maṅgala-muda-sid'dhi-sadani, parvaśarvarīśa-vadani,
 tāpa-timira taruṇa taraṇi-kiraṇamālīkā. 1.
 varma-carma kara kṛpāṇa, śūla-śēla-dhanuṣabāṇa,
 dharaṇi, dalani dānava-dala, raṇa-karālīkā.
 pūtanā-piśāca-prēta-ḍākinī-śākinī, samēta,
 bhūta - graha - bēṭāla - khaga - mṛgāli - jālikā. 2.
 jaya mahēśa-bhāminī, anēka-rūpa-nāminī,
 samasta-lōka-svāminī, himaśaila-bālīkā.
 raghupati-pada parama prēma, tulasī yaha acala nēma,
 dēhu hvai prasanna pāhi praṇata-pālīkā. 3.

Verse no. 16—Oh Mother of the World! Oh Goddess! Hail! Cheers for you! Glory to you! Gods, humans, hermits and demons—all serve (worship) you. You are a provider (bestower) of pleasures and comforts of the material world as well as spiritual emancipation and salvation. You are akin to Kalika (Goddess Kali) to remove the fear of your devotees. You are the abode of welfare, auspiciousness, joy and achievements (i.e. by serving you, all these can be made easily accessible). Your beautiful face is like that of a full moon. To destroy or eliminate the three forms of torments called Adhyatmik (spiritual problems), Adhibhautik (problems from the body and other terrestrial creatures), and Adhidaivik (problems created by malignant stars and other demonic or evil forces of creation) that act like darkness engulfing the creature from all sides and make him miserable and distressed, you come as a beacon of hope, solace and succour much like the rays of the mid-day sun which is able to remove all forms of darkness in this world. (1).

Your body has armour covering it. You have a shield, a sword, a trident, a dagger, a bow and an arrow in your hands. You are the slayer and destroyer of hordes of demons, and assume a ferocious form in the battle-field. You are like a net that catches hold of (i.e. helps to get rid of) the numerous flock of birds and groups of animals represented by evil spirits, ghosts, phantoms, hobgoblins, malignant planets and stars etc. (that are overpowered and vanquished by you, are made harmless, and prevented from tormenting the creatures of this world). (2).

Oh the consort of Shiva! Glory to you! You have numerous names and forms. You are the Mistress of the whole world and a daughter of Himachal (the king of mountains). You are the protector of those who have taken refuge and shelter with you. I, Tulsidas, desire to have unshakeable and supreme devotion in and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram, so be kind and gracious enough to give this to me, and extend

your protection to me at the same time. [That is, ensure that I am no longer bothered by the numerous evil forces of this world which have made my life hell at present, and which prevent me from getting near to my Lord Ram.] (3).

Prayer offered to the holy river Ganges

Rāga Rāmakaṭī

(17)

जय जय भगीरथनन्दिनि, मुनि-चय-चकोर-चन्दिनि,
 नर-नाग-बिबुध-बन्दिनि, जय जह्नु-बालिका ।
 बिस्नु-पद-सरोजजासि, ईस-सीसपर बिभासि,
 त्रिपथगासि, पुन्यरासि, पाप-छालिका ।।1।।
 बिमल बिपुल बहसि बारि, सीतल त्रयताप-हारि,
 भँवर बर बिभंगतर तरंग-मालिका ।
 पुरजन पूजोपहार, सोभित ससि धवलधार,
 भंजन भव-भार, भक्ति-कल्पथालिका ।।2।।
 निज तटबासी बिहंग, जल-थल-चर पसु-पतंग,
 कीट, जटिल तापस सब सरिस पालिका ।
 तुलसी तव तीर तीर सुमिरत रघुबंस-बीर,
 बिचरत मति देहि मोह-महिष-कालिका ।।3।।

(17)

jaya jaya bhagīrathanandini, muni-caya-cakōra-candini,
 nara-nāga-bibudha-bandini, jaya jahnu-bālikā.
 bisnu-pada-sarōjajāsi, īsa-sīsapara bibhāsi,
 tripathagāsi, pun'yarāsi, pāpa-chālikā. 1.
 bimala bipula bahasi bāri, sītala trayatāpa-hāri,
 bhamvara bara bibhaṅgātara taraṅga-mālikā.
 purajana pūjōpahāra, sōbhita sasi dhavaladhāra,
 bhanjana bhava-bhāra, bhakti-kalpathālikā. 2.
 nija taṭabāsi bihaṅga, jala-thala-cara pasu-pataṅga,
 kīṭa, jaṭila tāpasa saba sarisa pālikā.
 tulasī tava tīra tīra sumirata raghubansa-bīra,
 bicarata mati dēhi mōha-mahiṣa-kālikā. 3.

Verse no. 17—Oh daughter of Bhagirathi¹ (i.e. river Ganges)*! Hail and Cheers! Glory to you; glory to you! For the community of hermits and sages represented by Chakors, you are like the moon². Humans, serpents and Gods pray to you and sing your glories. Oh daughter of Jahanu³! Hail and Cheers! You are born from the feet (precisely the toe-nail) of Lord Vishnu, adorn the head of Shiva, and flow in three streams, one each in the terrestrial, the subterranean and the heavenly worlds. You are a treasury of righteousness, scrupulousness and good fortunes, and wash away the sins and evils. (1).

You have fathomless (i.e. an endless supply of) water which is holy and pure, and it is cool enough to remove the heat produced by 'Traitaap'⁴. You wear splendid garlands represented by enchanting pools of swirling water, and very energetic, playful and swift currents. Your frothy and simmering currents look magnificent like the moon, and are beautifully decorated by various items of worship that the devotees of the city have offered to your water. The current of your water is the destroyer of the burden consisting of birth and death in this world, and is like a hedge and protective shield for the purpose of providing protection to the Kalpa Tree that represents one's devotion for the Lord. (2).

You are unbiased, unpartisan and equitable while taking care and sustaining all the creatures, such as the numerous birds, aquatic animals, terrestrial creatures, animals, insects, worms, and ascetics with matted hairs (or hermits/sages etc.) etc. who reside on your banks.

Oh Ganges! You are like Kalika (the goddess of destruction) for killing the demon Mahisasur in the form of worldly attachments, attractions, entanglements and delusions! Give me (Tulsidas) such wisdom and discriminatory power that I may (abandon the deluding world) and freely roam (i.e. stay, or move about) along your banks, constantly and abidingly remembering and having an unflinching devotion for the great warrior of the clan of king Raghu—i.e. Lord Ram. (3).

[Note—*The story of the origin of the holy river Ganges is narrated in *Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurāṇa*, Skandha 5, Canto 17, verse nos. 1-10.

It was contained in the Kamandalu (water pot) of Brahma, the creator. This is said in *Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurāṇa*, Skandha 8, Canto 21, verse no. 4.

Then, its acceptance on the head of Lord Shiva where it was locked in the mat of thick hairs on the Lord's head is narrated in *Valmiki's Ramayan*, Baal Kand, Canto 42, verse nos. 23-25, and Canto 43, verse no. 1.

The story of why Bhagirath did Tapa to bring Ganges upon the earth is narrated in detail in *Valmiki's Ramayan*, Baal Kand, Sarga 38—44.

There is another version narrated in *Padma Puran*, *Srīsthi Khand*. Here, sage Veda Vyas, who was narrating the Puran to Brahmin audience, told the story of the origin and descent upon the earth of the holy river Ganges in detail when they asked him about it.

Briefly, the story of river Ganges is this: When Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Lord Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant, to crush the haughtiness of king Bali and prevent him from declaring himself the emperor of the entire universe, the Lord had expended his left foot so much that its toe nail had ruptured the outer shell of the galaxy, creating a hole. The inter-galactic river flowing outside the known galaxy gushed in through this hole to fill the whole space. When this celestial river touched the feet of Lord Vishnu, it turned reddish due to the colour of the Lord's feet which are like the red or pink lotus. Because it had its origin from the foot of Lord Vishnu, the primary name of river Ganges was 'Bhawatpadi'. ['Bhagwat' = Lord Vishnu; 'Padi' = from foot.]

After the passage of thousands of Yugas (eras), it established itself in the northern edge of the heaven where the Polar Star is situated. This area is known as 'Vishnu-pad'. It is here that the Lord's great devotee Dhruv accepts the water of this holy river as sanctified water, and the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-rishis hold it in the lock of hairs on their head. Meanwhile, when the celestial water poured in from the hole in the galaxy, the creator Brahma was alarmed because he realised that its fierce currents would sweep everything away, both in the heaven as well as on the earth where it descended to wash the feet of Lord Vaaman immediately after its

entrance in the habitable galaxy. So Brahma used his Kamandalu, the water pot, to contain river Ganges within it.

From the summit of the heaven, i.e. from its northern fringes, Ganges cascaded down to the abode of the Moon God, went past it and fell on the summit of Mt. Meru (the golden mountain where the Gods live, including their king Indra) which is situated within the realm of Brahma, the creator.

From there it divides into four branches—named Sita, Alaknanda, Chakchu and Bhadra.

Out of these, Sita descends from Brahma-puri to the summit of Mt. Kesaraachal, then goes further down and falls upon the summit of Mt. Gandha-maadan, and from there flows through the area known as Bhadraa-shwa-varsha to finally fall into the salty ocean in the east.

The second branch Alkananda falls to the south of Brahma-puri, goes past countless summits of mountains to finally arrive at the summit of Mt. Hemkut. From there, it cascades down with tremendous speed and force down upon the plains of India (known as Bharat-varsha). Then it traverses the length of the land to fall and merge with the ocean in the south.

Chakchu, the third branch, reaches the summit of Mt. Malyawaan, and from there it flows through the area known as Ketumal-varsha, heading in the western direction to finally fall in the sour ocean in the west.

The fourth branch, Bhadra, falls from the summit of Mt Meru and descends to its north. Falling from one mountain upon another, it reaches the summit of Mt. Sringawaan. From there it flows through the area of the land known as Kuru-desh to finally fall in the northern ocean.

This river is known as the River of Gods or river Gangaa. This is the origin of the river in its celestial form. Refer: Smd. Bhagwat, 5/17/1-9.

When Lord Vaaman's feet were being washed as part of the ritual to honour the guest Brahmin by king Vaaman, Brahma the creator had collected this water in his Kamandalu (water pot) because it was very holy. Refer. Smd. Bhagwat, 8/21/4.

Later on, when king Bhagirath had done severe Tapa (penance) to bring this holy river on the earth so that his ancestors who lay dead due to the curse of sage Kapil could be revived, Brahma told him that he must first prepare Lord Shiva to accept river Ganges on his head because when the river descends from heaven upon earth, it will do so with such tremendous force that the earth would not be able to bear it and would split into two. So Bhagirath did Tapa to please Lord Shiva who agreed to accept the cascading river on the lock of hairs on his head. Then he will gradually allow to let it down upon the plains is a stream that lacks the force by which the river falls thousands of miles from heaven. Refer: Valmiki Ramayan, 1/42/23-25, and 1/43/1.

The story of why Bhagirath did Tapa to bring Ganges upon the earth is narrated in detail in Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, Sarga 38—44.

Briefly this part of the story is as follows: King Sagar had done a great horse sacrifice known as 'Ashwamedh Yagya'. This sacrificial horse was stolen by Indra, the king of Gods who was renowned for his mischief and jealous nature, in the guise of a demon. The reason was that king Sagar had already done 99 such sacrifices, and if he successfully completed this 100th sacrifice, he would have become eligible for the stature of Indra. This Indra could not tolerate.

Now, king Sagar ordered his sixty thousand sons to go and find the horse. They dug up the entire earth in search of the horse, pursuing Indra relentlessly. During the process all the creatures who lived on the earth suffered immensely because their homes were demolished and they were uprooted from their natural habitats. This was what Indra wanted—to instigate Sagar to commit some sort of blunder that would invite the wrath of the creatures and the Brahmins, thereby inviting his own ruin. The Gods rushed to their patriarch Brahma, complaining about the developments. Brahma comforted them that they should not worry because Lord Vishnu who is responsible

for the welfare of the creation would certainly do something to rectify the damage and punish the perpetrator.

Meanwhile, even after searching the earth the sons could not find the sacrificial horse. When they reported this to their father, king Sagar, he strongly rebuked them and ordered them to go back and search once again. This time around, they dug up the subterranean world. Ultimately, they reached the hermitage of sage Kapil on the shore of the eastern ocean. The mischievous Indra had hidden the horse there, but sage Kapil had no idea that it was a stolen sacrificial horse. So, when Sagar's sons saw the horse there, they concluded that it was stolen by the sage, and they haughtily challenged him. The sage was very angry, and he cursed them, reducing them to ashes.

When these sixty thousand sons did not return even after a long time, king Sagar ordered his grandson Anshumaan to go and find out what had happened. Anshumaan followed the path taken by his uncles, and finally reached the place where he saw their ashes in a huge mound. Lamenting and grieving, he wanted to perform their last rites. He also found the horse grazing nearby. For doing the last rites he needed water. Just at that time, Lord Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu), who was the maternal uncle of his own uncles, came there and told Anshumaan that ordinary water won't liberate his uncles because they were reduced to ashes by the curse of a great sage named Kapil. For this, the water of the holy river Ganges is needed. So he must go and make an effort to bring Ganges to earth so that its water can flow over the ashes and provide your uncles deliverance. Meanwhile, he should take the sacrificial horse and go home to his grandfather.

King Sagar completed his sacrifice and returned to his capital. He did not know how to bring the celestial river of Gods to earth, and he died without accomplishing the task. After his death, Anshumaan ascended the throne. His son was king Dilip. Anshumaan abdicated the throne in favour of his son and went to the Himalayas to do severe Tapa, and died there.

King Dilip had a son named Bhagirath. Dilip did many sacrifices in order to bring river Ganges to earth so that his ancestor's souls could find deliverance, but failed. Worried and frustrated he fell sick and died.

Meanwhile, Bhagirath had no sons, but he still was determined to bring Ganges to earth and fulfill the long cherished desire of his father, grandfather and great grandfather. So he handed over the reins of the kingdom to his wise ministers and went to do the severest form of Tapa one can imagine of. His determination and noble resolve pleased Brahma, the creator, who revealed himself before him and asked him to request for a boon. Bhagirath replied that if Brahma really wants to grant him something then he should bless him that he be able to bring Ganges to earth and wash his ancestors with its holy water so that they can find deliverance. Brahma advised him that he must please Lord Shiva and request him to accept the river on his head prior to its reaching the surface of the earth—because if the river fell directly upon the earth it would split the latter into two with its tremendous force.

So, Bhagirath prayed to Shiva who was more than willing to accept Ganges on his head because the Lord knew that the river had its origin in the foot of Lord Vishnu. As soon as Shiva gave his consent to bear the river on his head, Brahma let his Kamandalu tilt and thus the mighty river Ganges came cascading down with a thunderous force to land upon the matted hairs of Lord Shiva. Ganges was very proud of its own origin and powers, so it thought that it will push Shiva to the under-world by its sheer force. Shiva wanted to teach Ganges a lesson not to be haughty, so the Lord contained the might of the swirling waters of the haughty Ganges in the lock of hairs on his head so much so that the river almost got lost amidst its huge crevices.

Bhagirath was confounded: after all the efforts made by him, the river still failed to reach the ground. So he did Tapa again to please Lord Shiva and ask him to allow Ganges to fall down to earth. Pleased with his sincerity and devotion, Lord Shiva allowed a thin stream of Ganges to escape from his head and fall in the 'Bindu-

sarovar (lake)'. Immediately upon reaching this lake, Ganges branched off into seven streams. The seventh stream followed king Bhagirath who lead its path on a chariot to the spot where the ashes of his ancestors lay. As soon as the holy water of the Ganges touched the ashes, the souls of the sixty thousand sons of king Sagar found liberation and deliverance.

At that time, Brahma appeared and blessed Bhagirath that henceforth Ganges would be deemed to be his daughter and bear his name. It would be known by three names—viz. 'Tripatha-gaa', 'Dibyaa' and 'Bhagirathi'. Hence, the holy river Ganges also came to be known as 'Bhagirathi', the daughter of Bhagirath. Since it flows in the whole of the three worlds, the heaven, the earth and the subterranean world, it is known as 'Tripatha-gaa'—that which flows on three paths. And since it is a holy and divine river, it is known as 'Dibya'—the divine and holy one.

There is another version narrated in *Padma Puran, Sristhi Khand*. Here, sage Veda Vyas, who was narrating the Puran to Brahmin audience, told the story of the origin and descent upon the earth of the holy river Ganges in detail when they asked him about it. Briefly this story is as follows:

Veda Vyas said—'In some ancient time, when sage Narad asked Brahma how creation came into being, Brahma told him that at the time of creation, he had requested the Paraa-Prakriti, the primary-primordial Mother Nature, to become the primary cause of creation. Brahma told her that he would use her to create everything.

Hearing this, the Paraa-Prakriti divided herself into seven forms. These seven forms are the following—(i) Gayatri (from which were produced all the Vedas, Swasti, Swaha, Swadha, and Diksha—i.e. all things related to the fire sacrifice), (ii) Vaag-devi or Saraswati, the goddess of speech and knowledge, through whom knowledge and scriptures spread, (iii) Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity that was needed to sustain and take care of the needs of the creation), (iv) Uma (the consort of Lord Shiva and said to be Mother Goddess from whom all other Gods and Goddesses originated; she is also the one who became instrumental in spread of knowledge), (v) Shakti-beeja (cosmic dynamic energy that gives all the Mantras their inherent mystical powers and is responsible for injecting vitality, energy and force into this creation), (vi) Tapaswini (the patron goddess or the cosmic force overlooking Tapa—austerity and penances), (vii) and Dharma-dravaa (the inherent powers of Dharma—everything that is in accordance to the laws of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics and morality).

Brahma thought that the last form, i.e. 'Dharma-dravaa', was the best of the seven forms, and since it was in a liquid form ('Dravaa' = liquid), he stored it into his Kamandalu (water pot).

Now, during the Lord's incarnation as Vaaman (the dwarf mendicant) when he had spread his left foot to measure the entire universe during the sacrifice of king Bali, this foot ruptured the sky and the heaven and appeared before Brahma. It was then that he washed the Lord's holy foot with the water that he had stored in his Kamandalu at the time of creation.

After the Lord's holy foot had been washed, this water fell on Mt. Hemkut. From there this water reached Lord Shiva who immediately placed it on his head because he realised it to be sanctified and holy as it had been used to wash the foot of Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Lord Vaaman. So, this water now was established on the thick lock of hairs on the head of Lord Shiva.

Later on when king Bhagirath had done severe Tapa with the intention of bringing this holy river on earth so that his dead ancestors could be revived and their souls could find peace, he had prayed to Lord Shiva to let the Ganges come down upon the earth. The Lord allowed its stream to descend upon the earth and follow Bhagirath across the land to the place where his ancestors lay dead. This is how the holy river descended upon earth and traversed eastwards following Bhagirath to finally merge into the ocean.

According to *Valmiki Ramayan*, Ganga was the elder daughter of Himwan, the king of the mountains, and his wife Maina. Maina was the daughter of Mt. Sumeru. The Gods took her to heaven because a number of divine deeds were destined to be dependent upon her. Refer: Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, Sarga, 35, verse nos. 13-18.

Tulsidas has praised river Ganges in *Kavitawali*, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 145—147.

¹'Bhagirath Nandini' (River Ganges; *bhagīrathanandini*): In the Sun-race, there was a great king called Sagar who had dug the oceans, thereby it being called after his name as 'Sagar'. The king had two queens; the first wife gave birth to a son called Anshuman while the other had 60,000 sons. The king performed a horse-sacrifice, during which, Indra stole the freely roaming sacrificial horse and hid it in sage Kapil's hermitage (at the site of present day Ganga-Sagar near Calcutta). The 60,000 sons who went out to search for the horse, found it at the hermitage and in consternation and anger, indignantly uttered some derogatory and insulting words to the sage. Enraged, the sage burnt them to ashes by his curse. The other son Anshuman's son was Bhagirath (grandson of Sagar) who did severe penances and austerities to bring the holy river Ganges down from the heaven on to the earth (at the site of Gangotri in the Himalayas) and led her to the site where his uncles lay dead. The touch of the holy water emancipated all of them. Hence, Ganges was called the daughter of Bhagirath or 'Bhagirath-Nandini' or 'Bhagirathi'.

²Chakor, the Indian red-legged partridge, is very enamoured of the moon, and feels exhilarated by its sight. Similarly, sages and saints too love the holy river Ganges and feel happy by its side.

³'Jahanu-Balika' (River Ganges; *jahnu-bālikā*): When the river was following Bhagirathi's chariot, it passed through the hermitage of sage Jahanu. Thinking it to be a deluge or a huge tidal wave, the sage drank it. Then, on being propitiated by Bhagirathi's prayers, he pierced his thighs to allow the river to re-emerge. Hence, she is called 'Jahnavi' (or emerging from the thighs of Jahanu) or 'Jahanu-Suta' (daughter of Jahanu).

⁴The Traitaap are the three forms of agonies that torment the creature—those related to the body are called Daihik, those related to other terrestrial creatures and existential problems are called Bhautik, and those related to the malignant stars and gods are called Daivik.]

(18)

जयति जय सुरसरी जगदखिल-पावनी ।
 विष्णु-पदकंज-मकरंद इव अम्बुवर वहसि, दुख दहसिअघवृन्द-विद्राविनी ॥1॥
 मिलित जलपात्र-अज युक्त-हरिचरणरज, विरज-वर-वारि त्रिपुरारि शिर-धामिनी ।
 जह्नु-कन्या धन्य पुण्यकृत सगर-सुत, भूधरद्रोणि-विहरणि बहुनामिनी ॥2॥
 यक्ष, गंधर्व, मुनि, किन्नरोरग, दनुज, मनुज मज्जहिं सुकृत-पुंज युत-कामिनी ।
 स्वर्ग-सोपान, विज्ञान-ज्ञानप्रदे, मोह-मद-मदन-पाथोज-हिमयामिनी ॥3॥
 हरित गंभीर वानीर दुहँ तीरवर, मध्य धारा विषद, विश्व-अभिरामिनी ।
 नील-पर्यंक-कृत-शयन सर्पेश जनु, सहस सीसावली स्रोत सुर-स्वामिनी ॥4॥
 अमित-महिमा, अमितरूप, भूपावली-मुकुट-मनिबंद्य त्रैलोक्य पथगामिनी ।
 देहि रघुवीर-पद-प्रीति निर्भर मातु, दासतुलसी त्रासहरणि भवभामिनी ॥5॥

(18)

jayati jaya surasarī jagadakhila-pāvanī.
 viṣṇu-padakanīja-makaranda iva ambuvara vahasi, dukha dahasi'aghavṛnda-
 vidrāvinī. 1.
 milita jalapātra-aja yukta-haricaraṇaraja, viraja-vara-vāri tripurāri śira-
 dhāminī.
 jahnu-kan'yā dhan'ya puṇyakṛta sagara-suta, bhūdharadrōṇi-viddaraṇi
 bahunāminī. 2.
 yakṣa, gandharva, muni, kinnarōraga, danuja, manuja majjahim sukṛta-
 paṇuja yuta-kāminī.
 svarga-sōpāna, vijñāna-jñānapradē, mōha-mada-madana-pāthōja-
 himayāminī. 3.
 harita gambhīra vānīra duhum' tīravara, madhya dhārā viśada, viśva-
 abhirāminī.
 nīla-paryāṅka-kṛta-śayana sarpēśa janu, sahasa sīsāvalī srōta sura-svāminī. 4.
 amita-mahimā, amitarūpa, bhūpāvalī-mukuṭa-manibandya trailōka
 pathagāminī.
 dēhi raghuvīra-pada-prīti nirbhara mātu, dāsatulasī trāsaharaṇi bhavabhāminī.
 5.

Verse no. 18—Oh the holy/sacred river of the Gods (i.e. river Ganges)! Glory to you! You are the cleanser and purifier of the whole world. You have water which is as holy and divine as the nectar dripping from the lotus-like feet of Lord Vishnu. You turn to ashes all sorts of sorrows and miseries, and at the same time annihilate all kinds of sins and evils. (1).

Your pristine pure water, which contains the dust of the holy feet of the Lord Hari (Vishnu), is collected and filled by Brahma in his Kamandalu (a wooden kettle-like pot to store water). You stay on the head of Lord Tripurari (Shiva)¹. Oh daughter of sage Jahanu (jahnu-kan'yā)²! You are praise-worthy and glorious. You had liberated the sixty thousand sons of king Sagar. You can pierce (drill through, or make a passage for yourself through) the caves of mountains. You have numerous names. (2).

Those Yakshas (Spirits who have some of the mystical powers of gods), Gandharva (celestial musician), hermits/mendicants, Kinnars (celestial singers and dancers), serpents (reptiles), demons and humans, who take a bath in your water along with their wives and children, become eligible for obtaining innumerable good fortunes and auspiciousness. You are a ladder for ascending to the heaven, and are a bestower of wisdom and knowledge. For the purpose of destroying (eliminating) the lotuses representing Moha (worldly attachments, entanglements and delusions), Mada (haughtiness, arrogance, pride, vanity) and Kaam (lust, passions and desires), you are akin to the might of the winter season. [The lotus flower perishes during winter and thrives during summer. Hence, this stanza alludes to it.] (3).

On both the sides of your banks, there are green and dense clusters of cane trees, and you meander along by a path that flows between them in a broad stream that is full of currents of pure water which provide solace and succour to the whole world. This is

such a beautiful and enchanting spectacle that resembles the thousand hooded Sesh-Nath (legendary serpent) who is fast asleep on a blue-coloured bedstead. Oh the Goddess of Gods! Your thousands of fountains and springs sprouting here and there look as splendid as (the thousand) hoods of Sesh-Nath. (4).

Your glory, majesty, grandeur and fame are unparalleled, measureless and endless. Your forms are countless. You are worshipped and adored by the crown jewels of kings (i.e. even kings bow their heads before you, or wash their crowns in your holy waters). Oh the one who traverses in this world along three paths! [The three paths are the ones that pass through the heavens, the terrestrial world, and the nether world.]

You are the beloved of Shiva. You are the mother who can eliminate the fear of existence. Give this Tulsidas eternal love and devotion in the holy feet of Raghuvir (Lord Ram). (5).

[Note—¹‘Tripuraari-sir-dhaamini’ (tripurāri śira-dhāminī): Afraid that the cascade of descending river Ganges from the heavens would flood the earth, Bhagirathi prayed to Shiva, who stopped the river midway in his lock of matted hairs (to break the river's tremendous impact and velocity). Since Shiva is also called Tripurari (see s.no. 2), the Ganges was christened ‘Tripurari-Sir-Dhamini’ (i.e., one who found rest or abode on the head of Tripurari).

²Jahnu-kan'yā—A sage named Jahanu's path was obstructed by Ganges. So he drank her. Later, the river emerged from his thighs. Hence, river Ganges is deemed to be this sage's daughter as it emerged from his body. The word ‘jahnu’ in Hindi stands for ‘thighs’, and the word ‘kan'yā’ stands for a ‘daughter’.]

(19)

हरनि, पाप त्रिबिध ताप सुमिरत सुरसरित ।
बिलसति महि कल्प-बेलि मुद, मनोरथ फरित ।।1।।
सोहत ससि धवल धार सुधा-सलिल-भरित ।
बिमलतर तरंग लसत रघुबर केसे चरित ।।2।।
तो बिनु जगदंब गंग कलिजुग का करित?
घोर भव-अपारसिंधु तुलसी किमि तरित ।।3।।

(19)

harani, pāpa tribidha tāpa sumirata surasarita.
bilasati mahi kalpa-bēli muda, manōratha pharita. 1.
sōhata sasi dhavala dhāra sudhā-salila-bharita.
bimalatara taraṅga lasata raghubara kēsē carita. 2.
tō binu jagadamba gaṅga kalijuga kā karita?
ghōra bhava-apārasindhu tulasī kimi tarita. 3.

Verse no. 19—Oh the holy/sacred river of the Gods (Ganges)! Immediately upon remembrance you eliminate sins and the heat generated by the three torments known

as Traitaps. [Refer verse no. 17/2.] You adorn this earth like an eternal creeper called 'Kalpa-Lata' which is full of fruits of joy and fulfilled wishes. (1).

Your stream which is of a white hue (because of the foam that collects due to its swift currents) looks as glorious as the moon. It is full of water that is as sweet as honey and is the liberator from the fear of death. In this stream rise currents which are as holy and pure as the divine stories of Raghuvar (Lord Ram). [That is, your water is as holy, divine, spiritually uplifting, glorious, and a provider of spiritual liberation and deliverance as the famed virtuous and auspicious story of Lord Ram.] (2).

Oh Ganges, the mother of the world! If you had not been present, no one knows what mischief and devastation this wild era known as Kaliyug would have done, and how this Tulsidas would have crossed this huge ocean-like mundane existence in this entrapping world. [For in all sooth, I am aghast at the horrors created by Kaliyug for all the creatures of this age.] (3).

(20)

ईस—सीस बससि, त्रिपथ लससि, नभ—पताल—धरनि ।
 सुर—नर—मुनि—नाग—सिद्ध—सुजन मंगल—करनि ॥1॥
 देखत दुख—दोष—दुरित—दाह—दारिद—दरनि ।
 सगर—सुवन—साँसति—समनि, जलनिधि जल भरनि ॥2॥
 महिमाकी अवधि करसि बहु बिधि—हरि—हरनि ।
 तुलसी करु बानि बिमल, बिमल बारि बरनि ॥3॥

(20)

īsa-sīsa basasi, tripatha lasasi, nabha-patāla-dharani.
 sura-nara-muni-nāga-sid'dha-sujana maṅgala-karani. 1.
 dēkhata dukha-dōṣa-durita-dāha-dārida-darani.
 sagara-suvana-sāṁśati-samani, jalanidhi jala bharani. 2.
 mahimākī avadhi karasi bahu bidhi-hari-harani.
 tulasī karu bāni bimala, bimala bāri barani. 3.

Verse no. 20—[Oh Ganges!] You reside on the head of Lord Isha (Shiva). While flowing through the three paths (i.e. the terrestrial, the subterranean and celestial paths) you look most majestic, glamorous and magnificent. You provide welfare and auspiciousness to the Gods, the humans, the hermits and sages, the serpents (terrestrial and subterranean creatures), and the mystics and saints (the pure-hearted ones). (1).

Immediately on seeing you, one's sins, sorrows, faults, torments, agonies, poverty and wants are all eliminated. You had liberated the sixty thousand sons of king Sagar from the torments of Yam (i.e. you had freed them from the horrors of death and hell). You constantly pour water in the ocean which itself is an endless treasury and abode of

water. [In other words, though the ocean is famed for being an endless container of water, it is actually you who continuously replenish its source of water. Otherwise, the ocean would go dry!] (2).

By being contained in the pot of Vidhi (Brahma), by emerging from the toes of Hari (Vishnu), and by taking abode on the head of Har (Shiva), you are the one who has enhanced the fame and glory of these three Gods. [That is, it is because of you and being associated with you that these three Gods of the Trinity have acquired such an exalted stature and fame. It is because of you that they are so much revered.]

Make the speech and voice of Tulsidas as pure and uncorrupt as your own water—which is the destroyer of sins—so that he (Tulsidas) can sing the glorious and divine deeds of Lord Ram, which is in turn the destroyers of all sins. (3).

Prayer offered to holy river Yamunā

Rāga Bilāvala

(21)

जमुना ज्यों ज्यों लागी बाढ़न ।
 त्यों त्यों सुकृत-सुभट कलि-भूपहिं, निदरि लगे बहु काढ़न ॥1॥
 ज्यों ज्यों जल मलीन त्यों त्यों जमगन मुख मलीन लहै आढ़ न ।
 तुलसिदास जगदघ जवास ज्यों अनघमेघ लगे डाढ़न ॥2॥

(21)

jamunā jyōm jyōm lāgī bāṛhana.
 tyōm tyōm sukr̥ta-subhaṭa kali-bhūpahim̐, nidari lagē bahu kāṛhana. 1.
 jyōm jyōm jala malīna tyōm tyōm jamagana mukha malīna lahai āṛha na.
 tulasidāsa jagadagha javāsa jyōm anaghamēgha lagē ḍāṛhana. 2.

Verse no. 21—As river Yamuna* began to rise and expand, the qualities of righteousness, scrupulousness, meritorious actions, noble virtues and auspiciousness manifested themselves as great warriors and began to subdue and scornfully eject the evil and unrighteous kings that rule the world in the guise of Kaliyug. (1).

During the rainy season, as the water of Yamuna begins to rise and become progressively turbid and dirty, the faces of the messengers of Yam (the god of hell and death) also begin to get darkened and gloomy for they feel frustrated and humiliated, wondering whom to take to hell, as they have lost all hope of being successful in their efforts. [As the virtues of righteous, auspiciousness, scrupulousness and noble conducts increased, the chances of anyone going to hell decreased in the same proportion. This frustrated the messengers of Yam.]

Tulsidas says that this rise and expansion of river Yamuna is like rising banks of rain-bearing dark clouds which symbolize increased auspicious and righteous virtues

in this world, and its effect is to reduce to ashes (eliminate and destroy) all the sins and negative virtues in the world in the form of Jawas plant. [Jawas plant is a rootless, prickly herb which ironically gets scorched and withers away, instead of flourishing, when rain-water falls on it.] (2).

[Note :- In this verse, Tulsidas has highlighted and extolled the good and virtuous effects of river Yamuna. Since it is a holy river like the Ganges, the rise in its water level symbolizes increase in auspiciousness, righteousness, noble and virtuous conducts, probity, propriety, scrupulousness etc. Likening it with rain, the poet says that even as the rain-water results in devastating the Jawas plant, so do these good virtues result in eliminating all the vices, evils, sins and faults that thrive in Kaliyug. Of special note is the fact that by alluding to the Jawas plant it is being emphasized that these negative traits do not have any permanent roots, and they can easily be uprooted and overcome.

*Yamuna is one of the most sacred rivers of India, revered next only to river Ganga or Ganges, and honoured alongside river Saraswati. In fact, these three rivers—viz. Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati—are regarded as the ‘Trinity of Rivers’, and the holy rivers of gods. Their confluence at a place known as ‘Triveni’ or Prayag (whose modern name is the city of Allahabad) is one of the holiest sites in India. In ancient times it was the seat of great sages and hermits, the most remarkable among them was sage Bharadwaj.

It finds mention in Rig Veda (the most ancient of the four Vedas) alongside Ganges—refer: Rig Veda, 10/75/5. It is mentioned in this Veda that king Sudaasa had taken the help of the Trastus to conquer the ten kings on its banks (refer: Rig Veda, 7/18/19). The legendary kings Bharat, Ambrisha and Shantaanu had performed many sacrifices on its banks. Similarly, the great sage Agastya (who is famed for drinking the entire ocean in a gulp) had done severe Tapa (penance and austerity) on the banks of Yamuna.

Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, had lived and did his worldly sport as a child on its banks where the twin cities of Mathura and Vrindavan are situated.

The river emerges from the Himalayan mountain ranges, from a particular mountain known by the name of ‘Kalinidi’. Hence, this river is also known as ‘Kaalindi’. After spouting out from the mighty Himalayas, it goes down the plains of northern India to merge with two other great rivers, Ganges and Saraswati, at Prayag. Since these three rivers merge here, this place is also known as ‘Triveni’ [“Tri” = three; “Veni” = a flowing stream; a river].

According to Puranic lore, Yamuna has other names also—such as ‘Surya-tanaya’ (or the daughter of the Sun God), and ‘Shamanasvasaa’. Yamuna is called ‘Surya-tanaya’ because she is said to be the daughter of the ‘Surya’ (Sun God) and Sangya-devi. The god of death, Yam, is her twin brother. She had invited Yam (her brother) for a hearty meal on Kaartika-Shukla-Dvitiya day which falls immediately after the famous festival of lights known as ‘Divaali’ or ‘Dipaawali’. Hence, it is considered auspicious for sisters to call their brothers on this day and feed them, as well as take a dip in the river Yamuna on this day.

It is believed that when Lord Shiva was overcome with grief at the loss of loving consort Sati (who had jumped into the fire and burnt herself when she discovered that Shiva had been insulted by her father during a fire sacrifice held by him), he had jumped into Yamuna out of grief, anger and frustration. This made the water turn black. Hence, the water of river Yamuna is mysteriously black in colour.

In images and iconography, Yamuna is depicted as a black goddess. She stands on a black tortoise, wears a garland of blue lotuses, and has two arms showing the ‘Varada’ and ‘Abhaya’ Mudras, meaning ‘postures that grant boons and fearlessness’.]

Prayer offered to Kāśī (Vārāṇasī)
(The holy pilgrim city said to be the terrestrial abode of Lord Śiva)

Rāga Bhairava

(22)

सेइय सहित सनेह देह भरि, कामधेनु कलि कासी ।
समनि सोक—संताप—पाप—रुज, सकल सुमंगल—रासी ।।1।।
मरजादा चहुँओर चरन बर, सेवत सुरपुर—बासी ।
तीरथ सब सुभ अंग रोम सिवलिंग अमित अबिनासी ।।2।।
अंतरऐन ऐन भल, थन फल, बच्छ बेद—बिस्वासी ।
गलकंबल बरुना बिभाति जनु, लूम लसति सरितासी ।।3।।
दंडपानि भैरव बिषान, मलरुचि—खलगन—भयदा—सी ।
लोल दिनेस त्रिलोचन लोचन, करनघंट घंटा—सी ।।4।।
मनिकर्निका बदन—ससि सुन्दर, सुरसरि—सुख सुखमा—सी ।
स्वारथ परमारथ परिपूरन, पंचकोसि महिमा—सी ।।5।।
बिस्वनाथ पालक कृपालुचित, लालति नित गिरिजा—सी ।
सिद्धि, सची, सारद पूजहिं, मन जोगवति रहति रमा—सी ।।6।।
पंचाच्छरी प्रान, मुद माधव, गव्य सुपंचनदा—सी ।
ब्रह्म—जीव—सम रामनाम जुग, आखर बिस्व—बिकासी ।।7।।
चारितु चरति करम कुकरम करि, मरत जीवगन घासी ।
लहत परमपद पय पावन, जेहि चहत प्रपंच—उदासी ।।8।।
कहत पुरान रची केसव निज कर—करतूति कला—सी ।
तुलसी बसि हरपुरी राम जपु, जो भयो चहै सुपासी ।।9।।

(22)

sē'iya sahita sanēha dēha bhari, kāmadhēnu kali kāśī.
samani sōka-santāpa-pāpa-ruja, sakala suman̄gala-rāsī. 1.
marajādā cahum̄ōra carana bara, sēvata surapura-bāsī.
tīratha saba subha aṅga rōma sivaliṅga amita abināsī. 2.
antara'aina aina bhala, thana phala, baccha bēda-bisvāsī.
galakambala barunā bibhāti janu, lūma lasati saritāsī. 3.
daṇḍapāni bhairava biṣāna, malaruci-khalagana-bhayadā-sī.
lōla dinēsa trilōcana lōcana, karanaghaṇṭa ghaṇṭā-sī. 4.
manikarnikā badana-sasi sundara, surasari-sukha sukhamā-sī.
svāratha paramāratha paripūrana, pañcakōsi mahimā-sī. 5.
bisvanātha pālaka kṛpālucita, lālati nita girijā-sī.
sid'dhi, sacī, sārada pūjahim̄, mana jōgavati rahati ramā-sī. 6.
pañcāccharī prāna, muda mādhaba, gabya supañcanadā-sī.
brahma-jīva-sama rāmanāma juga, ākhara bisva-bikāsī. 7.
cāritu carati karama kukarama kari, marata jīvagana ghāsī.
lahata paramapada paya pāvana, jēhi cahata prapañca-udāsī. 8.
kahata purāna racī kēsava nija kara-karatūti kalā-sī.

tulasī basi harapurī rāma japu, jō bhayō cahai supāsī. 9.

Verse no. 22—[In this verse, the holy city of Kashi* is compared to the holy cow called Kamdhenu.] In the present era known as Kaliyug, one should affectionately enjoy living in Kashi (the holy city of Varanasi) for the whole life, for it is like the legendary holy Kamdhenu cow. [This is the cow of gods and a fulfiller of all wishes. In the present context this allusion means that if one stays in Kashi, all his wishes would be fulfilled.]

This city is the destroyer of sorrows, torments, sins and diseases, and is the mine of all types of auspiciousness, welfares and well-beings. (1)

The four geographical boundaries or sides (i.e. the periphery) of Kashi are like the four feet of the Kamdhenu cow. The Gods of heaven serve its feet (hooves). All local ‘Tirthas’ (holy places of worship) are the different parts of this cow’s body, and the numerous eternal Shiva-Lingams (a conical, dome-shaped image of Shiva) that dot this city are its body-hairs. (2).

The center of Kashi is the nipple of this Kamdhenu cow, while the acclaimed fruits¹ of all endeavours are represented by its udders. Those who believe and have faith in the Vedas and other scriptures are like its calves—i.e. only those who believe and are faithful can get the milk of emancipation and salvation by residing here. The beautiful river known as Varuna adorns it like a necklace, while the river called Assi adorns it like a tail. (3).

The spear (or baton)-bearing Bhairav is its horn—i.e. this cow always instills fear among the sinners and the evil ones by showing then its horns. Its eyes are represented by ‘Lolarka’ (a water tank/pond) and ‘Trilochan’ (another holy place), while the holy place named ‘Karna-Ghanta’ is the bell tied around its neck². (4).

The ‘Manikarnika (Ghat)’ (the bank of the river Ganges where cremation takes place) is its beautiful moon-like mouth. [The word ‘mouth’ alludes to the fact that bodies are consumed here during cremation.] While the joy and pleasure that one derives on getting freedom from sins and torments by the blessings of the holy river Ganges are its quality and mark its fame and glory. The ‘Panch Kosi Praikrama’ (the circumnavigation of a holy site, consisting of a path that runs around the city and covers a distance of 5 Kosas or roughly 10 miles in circumference), which is full of the joys of worldly pleasures as well as those of spiritual emancipation and salvation, gives it its fame and renown. (5).

The merciful and kind-hearted Lord Vishwanath (literally, the Lord of the world; here referring to Shiva) takes care of this Kamdhenu-like city, and the loving mother, goddess Parvati, always shows her kind love and affection towards it. All the eight Siddhis (attainments, achievements), Saraswati (goddess of knowledge, wisdom) and Indrani (consort of Indra) worship it. Even Laxmi, who is powerful enough to sustain this world on her own (as she is the goddess of wealth and the divine consort of Vishnu), is careful, alert and hesitant while dealing with it (so as not to do anything that would annoy it). (6).

The five-syllable mantra ‘Namaha Shivaaya’ (dedicated to Lord Shiva) are the five ‘Prans’³ of this symbolic cow. Its joy is represented by God Bindu Madhav. The holy

site of ‘Panch-nadaa’ (also known as Panch Ganga) represents the five produces of the cow (i.e. curd, milk, butter, cow-dung, cow's urine). The two basic letters of the divine name of Lord Ram, i.e. ‘Ra’ and ‘Ma’, are like the supreme Brahm and the Jiva (the creature) respectively. (7).

This cow grazes on the grass representing all good and/or bad deeds of those who die here so that they can get the same milk in the form of attaining the supreme state of existence (i.e. obtaining ‘one-ness’ with the eternal Soul or the Supreme Being known as Brahm) that is so sought-after by great and acclaimed sages and hermits who have renounced this world. (8).

It is written in the Purans that Lord Vishnu used all his expertise and talents to create it (Kashi) by his own hands. Oh Tulsidas! If you want to be happy, chant Lord Ram’s holy name while residing in Kashi. (9).

[Note—*Kashi or Varanasi is believed to be the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva. According to the *Ram Uttar-Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, (especially verse no. 4) it is said that Lord Shiva utters the holy name of Lord Ram, known as the ‘Tarak Mantra’ (i.e. a divine formula that provides emancipation and salvation to the soul of a person so that he or she attains final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death in this world), in the ears of a dying person on the banks of river Ganges in Kashi, thereby ensuring that the soul of this person finds its ultimate liberation and deliverance.

Gowami Tulsidas has also praised the spiritual importance of Kashi as the place where Mukti (liberation and deliverance) of the creature is possible. Reference: (i) Dohawali, Doha no. 237; (ii) *Ram Charit Manas*, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119; and (iii) *Vinai Patrika*, verse no. 22.

In the epic ‘*Ram Charit Manas*’ of Goswami Tulsidas, Lord Shiva has himself said that he provides freedom from all sorts of sorrows, tolements and miseries to those who die at ‘Kashi’ relying on the strength of the divine name of Lord Ram which empowers him to do this, and which itself is the holy formula that enables a creature attain its final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. Shiva asserts that Lord Ram is the Supreme Being (“Parmatma”) who is the Lord of the entire creation (“Charaachar Swami”), and is also the deity whom Shiva worships as his own Lord God. Refer: *Ram Charit Manas*, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precedes Doha no. 119.

Kashi is called ‘Avimukta Kshetra—a place which provides liberation and deliverance to the soul.

The reason why *Kashi (Varanasi)* is called the ‘Avimukta Kshetra’ has been elaborately explained in the *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1 and Canto 4, verse nos. 1-16 (i.e. in the full Canto); and in *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 11.

The *symbolic location and the spiritual significance of Kashi (Varanasi)* has been elaborately described in the Atharva Veda’s *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 4, 9, 11, 16-19, 22.

In the *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 11, Lord Shiva has himself told sage Jabal Bhusund that Kashi (Varanasi) is the Abhimukta Kshetra where those who reside get Mukti (liberation and deliverance). To quote—

“Canto 2, paragraph no. 11 = [This paragraph describes the glories of the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva known as Kashi.]

For those desirous of Mukti (liberation and deliverance), residing in the pilgrim city of Kashi (the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva) is equivalent to doing Tapa¹

(penances, austerities and other holy deeds requiring commitment, sufferance, hardships and steadfastness). It is known as the Avimukta Kshetra². I provide liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to all those who live there.

Hence, those desiring such spiritual benefits should not abandon Kashi. There is no better place for spiritual welfare other than Kashi known as Avimukta Kshetra.

Kashi has four important places at four corners. Inside this periphery is the central area, known as the 'Anthaa Griha'. Inside this central area there are five important places. Amongst them, the shrine of Lord Shiva is the best and most holy.

To the east of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Aishwarya' (fame, majesty, glory, greatness, divine faculties, super-human powers, opulence, wealth, fortunes, grandeur etc.)

To the south of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Vichaalan' (factors that induce confusions, doubts, restlessness, agitation, flux, delusions, illusions, passions, attractions, attachments etc.).

To the west of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Vairagya' (renunciation, detachment, dispassion, neutrality, non-involvement etc.).

To the north of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Gyan' (truthful knowledge, enlightenment, realisation, erudition, wisdom etc.).

My (Shiva's) symbol or image known as 'Shiva Lingam' is established in this shrine. It has mystical qualities and eclectic virtues that reflect my glories, divinity and holiness. These qualities and virtues are as follows—

It is Anant (has no beginning or end, is infinite); it is Nirlipta (is not attached or attracted to anything or anyone); it is Avyaya (eternal, unchanging and imperishable; not to get diminished or degraded); it is Anaadi-Anant (has no beginning or end; is eternal and infinite); it is Ashesha (it leaves no remainder or residue; this is because it does not end, and is eternal and infinite); it is worthy of knowing and researching by the medium of the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Upanishads (Vedanta); is indescribable and incomprehensible; is immune to being degraded, denigrated or demeaned; is much sought after by my devotees and fulfills their desires; and is Advitya (non-dual, unique and one of its only kind).

Besides this, it is the Aadhar or support, foundation and basis of all that exists; is self-supporting and does not need for its self any foundation to rest upon; it is esoteric and mystical in as much as what it appears on the surface is not its true form (it appears to be a stone image, but actually it represents me who am invisible and ethereal); and is always honoured and worshipped by the various Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra etc.

This symbol of mine is an image of illumination and light. That is why it is known as 'Jyotirlingam'—the Lingam or symbol of Shiva that resembles a male phallus, is self-illuminated and effuses a glow of divinity and holiness.

One should worship, pay obeisance to and honour me as well as my symbol known as this Jyotirlingam. [11]"

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, describes what the Avimukta Kshetra is. To quote—"OM salutations! Brishaspati (the moral preceptor or the Guru of Gods) asked sage Yagyawalkya—'Oh Brahmin! Which is the holy site that dwarfs Kurukshetra in its holiness, divinity and sanctity? Which is the place chosen even by the Gods to worship their seniors? Which is the place much sought after by the creatures seeking spiritual deliverance, emancipation and salvation?'

Yagyawalkya replied—'Certainly, this place—which is known as 'Kashi' (also known as the city of Varanasi in the north of India)—is called the 'Avimukta Tirtha'.

It is the holy site which is the first and foremost place for doing noble, religious and righteous deeds—i.e. it is the 'Kurukshetra' for spiritual aspirants desirous of Mukti, or spiritual liberation and deliverance. [The word 'Kurukshetra' has two parts—'Kuru' means to 'do', and 'Kshetra' means an area or realm. Hence, the Kurukshetra is the area or place where one must do deeds in order to obtain one's

desired objectives or fulfill one's dreams. In the spiritual field, this doing of deeds in order to realise one's objectives is to do auspicious and righteous deeds so that Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, is obtained from the endless cycle of birth and death in which the creature is trapped from time immemorial and countless generations of previous births. It is not that doing of good deeds elsewhere would not bear sweet fruits, but only that here the results are quicker and easier to beget as the spiritual soil, so to say, is more fertile at this place, and harnessing of positive energy of the super Consciousness is more easy and readily possible here.]

It is the place of worship selected even by the Gods to honour the Supreme Being. It is the location where the creature can attain oneness with the Parmatma (the supreme transcendental Soul, or the Lord God of creation) more easily and with the least effort. Hence, one should treat this place called 'Kashi' as the real Kurukshetra as compared to other religious or pilgrim site he goes visiting in search of Mukti.

It is in this place where Lord Shiva (Rudra) preaches the dying creature about the 'Tarak Brahm'. This nectar-like advice makes the creature immortal, helps in his final liberation from all worldly fetters arising out of ignorance and delusions, and helps in his deliverance from this mundane world. It is this advice of Lord Shiva about the Tarak Brahm that gives the dying creature a once in a life-time opportunity and the final chance to obtain emancipation and salvation.

Hence, one should attempt to take up a residence in Kashi and have faith in its ability to provide Mukti. One should never abandon it. This is the truth¹. Sage Yagyawalkya thus explained the importance and significance of Kashi and the Tarak Brahm to Brishaspati (1)."

¹There are four great fruits—Artha (prosperity, wealth), Dharma (being auspicious, righteous and scrupulous; having probity, propriety and nobility of conduct), Kaam (fulfilled desires), and Moksha (attaining emancipation and salvation).

²'Karan-Ghant' (karanaghanta): A Brahmin in Varanasi was a great devotee of Shiva. He did not wish to hear the name of any other God except Shiva, so he had dangled two small bells from his ears so that their chiming would prevent the name of another God from being heard by him. Hence, he was called Karan-Ghant (the one with a bell on his ears). The site where he lived is known even today as Karan-Ghant locality.

³The five Prans are the following—Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaan. These are the five vital winds that keep any living being alive.]

Prayer offered to Citrakūṭa

(It was the verdant, charming forest where Lord Ram spent some of his time during his stay in the forest for 14 years. Hence, sanctified.)

Rāga Basanta

(23)

सब सोच-बिमोचन चित्रकूट । कलिहरन, करन कल्याण बूट ॥1॥
 सुचि अवनि सुहावनि आलबाल । कानन बिचित्र, बारी बिसाल ॥2॥
 मंदाकिनि-मालिनि सदा सींच । बर बारि, बिषम नर नारि नीच ॥3॥
 साखा सुसृंग, भूरुह-सुपात । निरञ्जर मधुबर, मृदु मलय बात ॥4॥
 सुक, पिक, मधुकर, मुनिबर बिहार । साधन प्रसून, फल चारि चारु ॥5॥

भव—धोरघाम—हर सुखद छाँह । थप्यो थिर प्रभाव जानकी—नाह ।।6।।
 साधक—सुपथिक बड़े भाग पाइ । पावत अनेक अभिमत अघाइ ।।7।।
 रस एक, रहित—गुन—करम—काल । सिय राम लखन पालक कृपाल ।।8।।
 तुलसी जो राम पद चाहिय प्रेम । सेइय गिरि करि निरुपाधि नेम ।।9।।

(23)

saba sōca-bimōcana citrakūṭa. kaliharana, karana kalyāna būṭa. 1.
 suci avani suhāvani ālabāla. kānana bicitra, bārī bisāla. 2.
 mandākini-mālīni sadā sīnca. bara bārī, biṣama nara nārī nīca. 3.
 sākhā susamṛga, bhūruha-supāta. nirajhara madhubara, mṛdu malaya bāta.
 4.
 suka, pika, madhukara, munibara bihāru. sādhana prasūna, phala cāri cāru. 5.
 bhava-dhōraghāma-hara sukhada chāmha. thapyō thira prabhāva jānakī-
 nāha. 6.
 sādhaaka-supathika barē bhāga pā'i. pāvata anēka abhimata aghā'i. 7.
 rasa ēka, rahita-guna-karama-kāla. siya rāma lakhana pālaka kṛpāla. 8.
 tulasī jō rāma pada cahiya prēma. sē'iya giri kari nirupādhi nēma. 9.

Verse no. 23—[In this verse, the holy city of Chitrakoot that is associated with the story of Lord Ram is compared to a ever-green tree that is all wish-fulfilling.] Chitrakoot* can give liberation from all types of sorrows, troubles and grief. It is like a blossoming ever-green tree that is the destroyer of all the painful afflictions caused by Kaliyug, and a giver of auspiciousness and all round welfare. (1).

The holy land (of Chitrakoot) is the soil for the growth of this symbolic tree, and the strange and indescribable verdant forests that surround it are like a great hedge around its periphery. (2).

The gardener in the form of river Mandakini nourishes and waters (sustains) this tree with its water which does not get polluted or de-sanctified even when wicked, mean and evil persons bathe in it daily. (3).

The magnificent mountain-tops are the branches of this tree, and the numerous trees that grow on them are like its beautiful leaves. The waterfalls are like the nectar or sweet sap oozing from it, while the breeze blowing in this city with a fragrance of sandalwood is like the tenderness of this tree. (4).

The exalted hermits, saints and sages who reside and move around here (in Chitrakoot) are like the numerous parrots, cuckoos and bumble-bees that throng this tree. The numerous means and ways adopted by them (for worship, meditation, yoga etc.) are like the various flowers that adorn this tree, while its four fruits. [The four fruits are Artha, Dhrama, Kaam, Moksha. Refer note of verse no. 22.] (5).

The shadow of this tree overcomes (protects from) the harsh sunlight representing the horrors of birth and death in this world, and gives comfort and succour from its heat (i.e. from the sufferings of the world). The Lord of Janki (i.e. Lord Ram, the divine husband of Sita, the daughter of king Janak) has made the good effects of this place

(as described herein above) permanent for all times to come. [Chitrakoot is blessed by Lord Ram because he had lived here for a considerable time during his journey through the forest during his sojourn on earth. See verse no. 24.] (6).

Pedestrians and travelers in the form of Sadhaks (spiritual seekers) achieve the proximity of this tree during their journey through life with great deal of luck (i.e. only when they are fortunate), and once achieved, they feel contented and fulfilled upon receiving all the desired happiness and joys of different types. [Only the lucky ones are able to live here and enjoy its spiritual gains.] (7).

It is immune to and free from the evil effects of Maya (worldly delusions and attachments arising out of ignorance), Kaal (death, unfortunate circumstances and bad times) and deeds (spiritual entrapments caused by either the good or the bad deeds). It remains uniform, stable and unchanging under all circumstances. These benefits are made possible because Lord Ram, Sita and Laxman are its protectors. (8).

Oh Tulsidas! If you wish to have love and devotion in the holy feet of Lord Ram, you should diligently serve (or reside in and benefit from the proximity of) the Chitrakoot mountains without having any sort of deceit, conceit, crookedness and pretensions. (9).

[Note—*Chitrakoot is the place in central India where Lord Ram had spent some of his days while he stayed in the forest for 14 years. The Lord was directed here by sage Valmiki. Refer: Tulsidas' epic book 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 132—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 142.

Refer also to "Geetawali" of Tulsidas, Ayodhya Kand, verse nos. 43—50 where the beauty and glory of Chitrakoot have been described in vivid terms.]

Rāga Kānharā

(24)

अब चित चेति चित्रकूटहि चलु ।
 कोपित कलि, लोपित मंगल मगु, बिलसत बढत मोह—माया—मलु ।।1।।
 भूमि बिलोकु राम—पद—अंकित, बन बिलोकु रघुबर—बिहारथलु ।
 सैल—सृंग भवभंग—हेतु लखु, दलन कपट—पाखंड—दंभ—दलु ।।2।।
 जहँ जनमे जग—जनक जगतपति, बिधि—हरि—हर परिहरि प्रपंच छलु ।
 सकृत प्रबेस करत जेहि आश्रम, बिगत—बिशाद भये पारथ नलु ।।3।।
 न करु बिलंब बिचारु चारुमति, बरष पाछिले सम अगिले पलु ।
 मंत्र सो जाइ जपहि, जो जपि भे, अजर अमर हर अचइ हलाहलु ।।4।।
 रामनाम—जप जाग करत नित, मज्जत पय पावन पीवत जलु ।
 करिहँ राम भावतौ मनकौ, सुख—साधन, अनयास महाफलु ।।5।।
 कामद मनि कामता—कलपतरु सो जुग—जुग जागत जगतीतलु ।
 तुलसी तोहि बिसेषि बूझिये, एक प्रतीति—प्रीति एकै बलु ।।6।।

(24)

aba cita cēti citrakūṭahi calu.

kōpita kali, lōpita maṅgala magu, bilasata baṛhata mōha-māyā-malu. 1.

bhūmi bilōku rāma-pada-aṅkita, bana bilōku raghubara-bihārathalu.

saila-sṛṅga bhavabhaṅga-hētu lakhu, dalana kapaṭa-pākhaṇḍa-dambha-dalu.

2.

jaham̐ janamē jaga-janaka jagatapati, bidhi-hari-hara parihari prapañca chalu.

sakṛta prabēsa karata jēhi āśrama, bigata-biśāda bhayē pāratha nalu. 3.

na karu bilamba bicāru cārumati, baraṣa pāchilē sama agilē palu.

mantra sō jā'i japahi, jō japi bhē, ajara amara hara aca'i halāhalu. 4.

rāmanāma-japa jāga karata nita, majjata paya pāvana pīvata jalu.

karihair̐ rāma bhāvatau manakau, sukha-sādhana, anayāsa mahāphalu. 5.

kāmada mani kāmata-kalapataru sō juga-juga jāgata jagatītalū.

tulasī tōhi bisēṣi bījhiyē, ēka pratīti-prīti ēkai balu. 6.

Verse no. 24—Oh Chitta (mind and sub-conscious)! Wake-up and be alert. Let's go to Chitrakoot. Kaliyug's malicious wrath and evil designs have hidden or obscured the path of welfare, auspiciousness and fortunes represented by Dharma and Devotion to the Lord. Instead, negativity created by delusions, worldly attachments, sins, evil deeds and perversion are ascendant and increasing by the day. (1).

While in Chitrakoot, you must have a 'Darshan' (divine viewing) of the land which is sanctified and marked by the holy feet of Lord Ram. It is the forest-place where the Lord had resided during his exile. View those mountain tops that are the destroyers of such evil traits and vices as deceit, conceit, crookedness, fraud, meanness, hearsay, hypocrisy, wickedness, haughtiness, vanity etc. At the same time, the auspicious view of these mountain tops act as symbolic liberators from this world of birth and death. [Tulsidas means that since these mountain peaks are pointed and conical in shape they can 'spike, pierce, kill and destroy' all the evil tendencies that torment the seekers of spiritualism.] (2).

Here (in Chitrakoot) the father and Lord of creation had taken birth. This happened when the Trinity Gods known as Vidhi (Brahma), Hari (Vishnu) and Har (Shiva)¹ had abandoned all their cunning, trickery and deception (and took birth as sons of hermitress Anusuiya, the wife of sage Atri). As soon as Yudhisthir and other Pandavas (of the epic Mahabharata fame), who had lost everything in gambling (dice-playing) and had been roaming aimlessly in forests during their wandering in exile, entered it (Chitrakoot) they had lost all their sorrows and sufferings (i.e. they found peace and solace). The same thing (happiness, tranquility and solace) was experienced by king Nal too. (3).

Don't delay anymore in going there. Use your wisdom and don't lament (repent or regret) at the time or years of your life that have gone by, but think of those that are still left. Considering that every moment of your remaining life is as valuable as one year, with death almost near at hand, you should quickly (without wasting anymore time and procrastinating further) go to Chitrakoot and chant Lord Ram's holy name (Mantra) there, the chanting of which made Shiva ageless and free from the disastrous

effects of drinking the horrible poison (that he had emerged at the time of churning of the ocean by the Gods and the demons). (4).

When you would constantly do Japa (repetition) of the holy name of Lord Ram while living there, along with performing Yagya (religious sacrifices and observing sacraments) and daily bathing in and drink the holy waters of Payeswani (a river near Mandakini), then it is sure that Lord Ram would fulfill all your desires. By adopting this easy and joyful path you would easily obtain the four great fruits that are obtainable as a reward for any endeavour. [These four fruits are Artha, Dharma, Kaam and Moksha.] (5).

The 'Kamta Nath' mountain in Chitrakoot glitters on this earth and lasts for countless ages much like the all wish-fulfilling Chintamani gem as well as the Kalpa Tree. [The 'Chintamani is a mystical gem which has the magical power to abolish or overcome all worries. The Kalpa Tree is the ever-green tree of the Gods and is believed to all wish-fulfilling.] Chitrakoot is beneficial for all in general, but oh Tulsidas, you should specially rely on its mystical and spiritual powers, have great faith in it, be convinced of its powers, and serve it with great devotion and affection as a fulfiller of your wishes. (6).

[Note—'Vidhi-Hari-Har' (bidhi-hari-hara): Hermit (sage) Atri and his hermitress wife Anusuiya lived in Chitrakoot. To beget a son, they prayed to Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva, and asked them for a son in their likeness or image. Later on, Vishnu manifested as sage Dattatreya, Shiva as Durvasa and Brahma as the Moon-God.]

Prayer offered to Lord Hanumāna

Rāga Dhanāśrī

(25)

जयत्यंजनी-गर्भ-अंभोधि-संभूत-विधु, विबुध-कुल-कैरवानंदकारी ।
 केसरी-चारु-लोचन-चकोरक-सुखद, लोकगन षोक-संतापहारी ॥1॥
 जयति जय बालकपि केलि-कौतुक उदित चंडकर-मंडल-ग्रासकर्ता ।
 राहु-रवि-शक्र पवि-गर्व-खर्वीकरण शरण भयहरण जय भुवन-भर्ता ॥2॥
 जयति रणधीर, रघुवीरहित, देवमणि, रुद्र-अवतार, संसार-पाता ।
 विप्र-सुर-सिद्ध-मुनि-आशिषाकारवपुष, विमलगुण, बुद्धि-वारिधि-विधाता ॥3॥
 जयति सुग्रीव ऋक्षादि रक्षण-निपुण, बालि बलशालि-बध-मुख्यहेतू ।
 जलधि-लंघन सिंह सिंहिका-मद-मथन, रजनिचर-नगर-उत्पात-केतू ॥4॥
 जयति भून्दिनी-शोच-मोचन विपिन-दलन घननादवश विगतशंका ।
 लूमलीलाऽनल-ज्वालमालाकुलित, होलिकाकरण लंकेश-लंका ॥5॥
 जयति सौमित्रि-रघुनंदनानंदकर, ऋक्ष-कपि-कटक-संघट-विधायी ।
 बद्ध-बारिधि-सेतु, अमर-मंगल हेतु, भानुकुल-केतु-रणविजयदायी ॥6॥
 जयति जय वज्रतनुदषण नख मुख विकट, चंड-भुजदंड तरु-शैल-पानी ।
 समर-तैलिक-यंत्र तिल-तमीचर-निकर, पेरि डारे सुभट घालि घानी ॥7॥

जयति दशकंठ—घटकर्ण—वारिद—नाद—कदन—कारन, कालिनेमि—हंता ।
 अघटघटना—सुघट सुघट—विघटन विकट, भूमि—पाताल—जल—गगन—गंता ॥ ८ ॥
 जयति विश्व—विख्यात बानैत—विरुदावली, विदुष बरनत वेद विमल बानी ।
 दास तुलसी त्रास षमन सीतारमण संग षोभित राम—राजधानी ॥ ९ ॥

(25)

jayatyanjani-garbha-ambhōdhi-sambhūta-vidhu, vibudha-kula-
 kairavānandakārī.
 kēsari-cāru-lōcana-cakōraka-sukhada, lōkagana śōka-santāpahārī. 1.
 jayati jaya bālakapi kēli-kautuka udita caṇḍakara-maṇḍala-grāsakatrtā.
 rāhu-ravi-śakra pavi-garva-kharvikaraṇa śaraṇa bhayaharaṇa jaya bhuvana-
 bhatrtā. 2.
 jayati raṇadhīra, raghuvīrahita, dēvamaṇi, rudra-avatāra, sansāra-pātā.
 vipra-sura-sid'dha-muni-āśiṣākāravapuṣa, vimalaguṇa, bud'dhi-vāridhi-
 vidhātā. 3.
 jayati sugrīva ṛkṣādi rakṣaṇa-nipuṇa, bālī balaśāli-badha-mukhyahētū.
 jaladhi-laṅghana sinha sinhikā-mada-mathana, rajanicara-nagara-utpāta-kētū.
 4.
 jayati bhūnandini-śōca-mōcana vipina-dalana ghananādavaśa vigataśaṅkā.
 lūmalīlāhala-jvālamālākulita, hōlikākaraṇa laṅkēśa-laṅkā. 5.
 jayati saumitri-raghunandanānandakara, ṛkṣa-kapi-kaṭaka-saṅghaṭa-vidhāyī.
 bad'dha-bāridhi-sētu, amara-maṅgala hētu, bhānukula-kētu-raṇavijayadāyī. 6.
 jayati jaya vajratanu daśana nakha mukha vikaṭa, caṇḍa-bhujadaṇḍa taru-
 śaila-pānī.
 samara-tailika-yantra tila-tamīcara-nikara, pēri ḍārē subhaṭa ghāli ghānī. 7.
 jayati daśakaṇṭha-ghaṭakarṇa-vārida-nāda-kadana-kāraṇa, kālinēmi-hantā.
 aghaṭaghaṭanā-sughaṭa sughaṭa-vighaṭana vikaṭa, bhūmi-pātāla-jala-gagana-
 gantā. 8.
 jayati viśva-vikhyāta bānaita-virudāvalī, viduṣa baranata vēda vimala bānī.
 dāsa tulasī trāsa śamana sītāramaṇa saṅga śōbhita rāma-rājadhānī. 9.

Verse no. 25—[Verse nos. 25-36 are prayers offered to Lord Hanuman.] Oh Hanuman*! Glory to you! You took birth from the womb of Anjani as if it were an ocean from which the moon emerged, and the Gods in the form of lotuses blossomed (prospered and found fearlessness) in your presence. You please the eyes of Kesari (your father) which are symbolically like Chakor birds (a bird which constantly fixes its gaze on the moon). [Kesari is very pleased and happy when he sees you.] You dispel the sorrows and pains of the whole world. (1).

Glory to you! During your childhood you had playfully swallowed the rising sun, thinking it to be a big red (i.e. ripe) fruit. {udita caṇḍakara-maṇḍala-grāsakatrtā}¹. At the time, you had crushed (vanquished) the pride, vanity and ego of Rahu (a demon with only a head), Sun, Indra (the king of Gods) and Vajra (Thunderbolt). Glory to you! You are the dispeller of fear of those who seek your refuge and shelter, and are the sustainer and care-taker of the world. (2).

Glory to you! You are steady and valiant in the battle-field. You always strive for doing well of Raghuvir (Lord Ram). You are a manifestation (or a revelation) of Rudra (Lord Shiva) { *rudra-avatāra* }² who is the most exalted of Gods. You are the protector of the world. Your body is an embodiment of the blessings of Brahmins (the learned ones), Gods, Siddhas (the attained ones or those who have special mystical powers), ascetics and hermits. You are an ocean of immaculate qualities and virtues as well as of high wisdom, erudition and intelligence. You are a controller of destiny. (3).

Glory to you! You are diligent, expert and proficient in protecting the interests of Sugriv (the king of the monkeys) and Jamvant (the king of the bears) { *jayati sugrīva ṛkṣādi rakṣaṇa-nipuṇa* }³. You are the chief agent that brought about the death of Baali (the elder brother of Sugriv) who was very strong, brave and valiant { *bāli balaśāli-badha-mukhyahētū* }⁴. While crossing the ocean you were like a lion for subduing the demoness called 'Singhika' { *sinha sinhikā-mada-mathana* }⁵, and were like a comet (a harbinger of bad omens) for Lanka { *rajanicara-nagara-utpāta-kētū* }⁶. (4).

Glory to you! You are the one who had removed the worries of 'Bhu-Nandani' (literally the 'daughter of mother Earth', i.e. Sita, by conveying the happy news of Lord Ram's well-being and his intention to recover her) { *bhūnandinī-śōca-mōcana* }⁷, and it was you who had laid waste Ravana's Ashok Grove. You had willingly surrendered to Meghnad (and allowed him to capture you), and then you created a virtual Holi (a festival having its origin in fire) in Lanka by burning it down with the aid of furiously leaping flames from your burning tail. [This alludes to the burning of the city of Lanka, the capital of the demon king Ravana, in the epic Ramayana.] (5).

Glory to you! You gave peace and happiness to Lord Ram and Laxman. You had constructed a bridge over the ocean after assembling an army of bears and monkeys. You are the benefactor of Gods and provide welfare to them. And you are the one who was instrumental in the victory of 'Bhanukulketu' (literally the bright star in the Solar race, i.e. Lord Ram) in the battle-field (of Lanka) (6).

Glory to you! Your body, teeth, nails and ferocious looking mouth are as strong as Vajra (which is the weapon of Indra, the king of Gods, and made of the hardest element in existence; the thunderbolt). Your arms have immense strength, and you bear mountain and trees in your hands. You had crushed the hordes of demons as if they were mustard-seeds being crushed to extract oil in a mill. (7).

Glory to you! You are the main factor in the slaying or elimination the demons named Ravana (the ten-necked one: *daśakaṇṭha*), Kumbhkarna (the one whose ears were as large as a big water-pitcher: *ghaṭakarna*), and Meghnad (the one who roared like the rain-bearing cloud: *vārida-nāda*)⁸. You were the one who had killed the deceitful and crooked demon called Kalnemi { *kālinēmi-hantā* }⁹. You can make things possible out of impossible things, and vice-versa. You are most terrible and awe-inspiring. You can reach unhindered have access to all parts of the earth, the subterranean world, the ocean and the sky. (8).

Glory to you! You are famous in the world, and are always ahead in bravery. The wise ones and the Vedas have sung your praises and glories in unison and without reservations. You are the dispeller of Tulsidas' fears of this ocean-like mundane world (consisting of birth and death and their attendant uncountable horrors). And you are always glorified and adored along with the dear Lord of Sita (i.e. Lord Ram) in the capital city of Lord Ram (i.e. at Ayodhya). (9).

[Note—*A life sketch of Hanuman is narrated in the following scriptures—(i) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 13, verse nos. 155-190; (ii) Valmiki's Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Sarga (Canto) 66, verse nos. 1-17 (as narrated by Jamvant, the Bear king); Uttar Kand, Sarga 35-36 (as described to Sri Ram by sage Agastya).

These describe Hanuman as the son of the Wind God.

But it is also universally believed that Hanuman is a manifestation of Lord Shiva, and represents the 'Tej' (glory and dynamism) of Lord Ram. This is clearly mentioned in Brihad Brahm Sanhita, Chapter (Pratham) 3, Canto (Adhyaya) 1, verse (Shloka) no. 102. This verse also says that it is Lord Shiva who manifested also as Sankarshan, one of the forms of Lord Vishnu. In the case of Hanuman, it is said here that "Hanuman is a manifestation of Lord Maha Shiva, and represents the Tej (glory and dynamic aspect) of Lord Ram".

Lord Hanuman was one of the greatest devotees of Lord Ram. His devotion for Lord Ram had no match. He is regarded as the wisest, the most enlightened and a highly self-realised soul. He is an incarnation of the eleventh form of Lord Shiva that is known as Rudra. When Lord Vishnu decided to manifest himself as Lord Ram in this world, all the different Gods has assumed various forms to serve the Lord. Shiva had taken the form of Hanuman to serve Lord Ram.

According to the Purans (mythological histories), the name of his mother was Anjana. She was the wife of the monkey king Kesari. He was born as a grace of the Wind God, also known as Marut. Hence, Hanuman was also known as 'Anjaneya' or 'Maruti'. However, his most common name 'Hanuman' is derived from the fact that once he had been hit by the 'Vajra', the hard weapon of Indra, the king of Gods. The story goes that once, a little time after his birth, the infant Hanuman had felt extremely hungry, and seeing the rising sun he thought it to be some ripe red fruit dangling from the sky. So he leapt to the sky to eat the rising sun. Incidentally, it was the time of the solar eclipse, when, according to mythology, the head of the demon known as Rahu was proceeding to devour the sun. When he saw Hanuman rushing towards the sun, Rahu ran away scared, thinking that Hanuman was some competitor who was out there to grab his food. Rahu complained to Indra, the king of Gods, that he is being denied his regular meal. At this, Indra intervened. When Hanuman saw Indra approaching astride his white majestic elephant known as Eraavat, he thought that it was some other white fruit. So he left sun alone and instead leapt at Eraavat. Indra was shocked, confounded and perplexed, and in order to stop Hanuman he threw his formidable weapon known as Vajra. The Vajra hit him on the chin, thereby causing a dent. The jaw swelled as result. This incident gave 'Hanuman' his famous name.

The word 'Hanu' means the lower jaw, the chin, while 'Maan' means to hit to subdue or defeat. Another interpretation is that 'Hanu' means to crush, to trounce, to take away, or to eliminate, and 'Maan' means one's pride, arrogance, haughtiness and ego. So the composite word 'Hanuman' refers to this incident when Indra had subdued the son of the Wind God by breaking his chin-bone as a token punishment for him being extremely arrogant and unnecessarily mischievous.

But when the Wind God saw that Hanuman was hurt, he became extremely angry as Hanuman was born as his grace, so he stopped the movement of air. This caused suffocation in this creation and all the Gods were on the verge of asphyxiation. So they appeased the Wind God by blessing Hanuman with invincibility and formidable

powers. This made Hanuman immortal and immune to the dangers of fire, water and wind.

Once as a child he was even cursed by sages because of his mischievous nature as he used to play havoc with the trees and plants around the hermitages and forests where they lived, uprooting them, breaking their branches, eating their fruits and littering the place all around. So they cursed him that he would forget his powers till the time someone reminded him about them. As it happened, when the monkeys and bears set out in search of Sita, who had been abducted by the demon king of Lanka known as Ravana, and had reached the shores of the vast ocean, they faced the formidable challenge of having to cross it, face this formidable enemy, and come back alive. It was then that Jamvant, the old patriarch of the bears, had reminded Hanuman about his lost strength. Hanuman regained his old stupendous powers and abilities, and he was the one who not only crossed the ocean but also burnt Lanka before coming back with the news of Sita. These events are narrated in the epic Ramayana in great detail.

Hanuman can be likened to a diamond amongst all the characters in the epic story of Ramayan which deals with Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Ram. In fact, the story of Lord Ram and his conquest of Lanka would not have been what it was without Hanuman. Even Lord Ram had openly accepted his indebtedness to Hanuman.

It is believed that when Lord Ram left this world for his heavenly abode during the final episodes of Ramayana, all those who were close to him as well as the rest of his subjects had also left this world with the Lord. But Hanuman remained behind with the express mandate from the Lord to ensure that the Lord's glory as well as the glory of his divine name can be perpetuated, and to ensure that the devotees of the Lord can be afforded protection. This has been narrated in (i) Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 9, verse nos. 34-36; (ii) Anand Ramayan, Purva Kand, Sarga (Canto) 5, verse nos. 9-13; (iii) Valmiki Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Sarga 108, verse nos. 32-35.

Hanuman had immense mental and physical agility, strength, power and prowess. His character was immaculate and his intellect was of high refinement. He had complete, unchallenged and unparalleled knowledge of the scriptures. One of the reasons is that his teacher was the Sun God himself who had taught him all the Vedas and other scriptures. His speech was elegant and scholarly. He is regarded as a treasury of the eight Siddhis (mystical powers) and the nine Nidhis (spiritual assets). He was a renunciate and a celibate since birth.

The eight Siddhis which Hanuman possessed were the following—(i) 'Anima'—means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; to become small like an atom; (ii) 'Mahima'—is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; to become huge like a mountain, thereby standing out and being unique or special in a crowd; (iii) 'Garima'—is to be heavy-weight in any field, to have special qualities that give one's ideas and words a great amount of importance and weight; to have stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) 'Laghima'—is the grand virtue of being simple and humble in spite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) 'Praapti'—is to be able to attain, gain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya'—is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa'—is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; to be able to rule over others; (viii) 'Vashitwa'—is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient and subservient.

The nine Nidhis that Hanuman possessed were the following—Spiritual assets—according to saint Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha 35-36, they

are—(i) communion with saints and pious people where the Lord's glories are being sung, (ii) serving one's teacher and elders, (iii) praising the Lord's glories and doing Kirtan and Bhajan which are community singing of the Lord's glories, (iv) repeating the divine Mantras or holy words of the Lord, i.e. doing Japa, (v) having such virtues as 'Dam' or tolerance, patience, fortitude and resilience, 'Sheel' or good and righteous demeanors, 'Virati' or being renunciate and detached from deeds and to be dispassionate towards the world, 'Sam' or equanimity, looking everything as Brahm, having a non-dual approach of or view of the world, 'Santosh' or contentedness, and 'Sara' or simplicity and humility, (vi) having no deceit, conceit and falsehoods, (vii) not finding faults with others and criticising them unnecessarily, (viii) to have firm reliance and faith in the Lord, and (ix) not to feel dejected, depressed, despaired, inferior, lowly and condemned under any adverse circumstances, because the great and merciful Lord is always with them.

According to another version, the nine Nidhis are the various special virtues or qualities or attributes that one possesses, and which make him special amongst others. They are the following—(i) Buddhi—intelligence and the power to discriminate, to think sharply, quickly, logically, rationally, deeply and analytically. (ii) Bal—strength, vigour and power of the body and of the mind as well as of the spirit. (iii) Yasha—fame, good reputation and name; majesty and renown. (iv) Dhairya—to have courage, fortitude, resilience, ability to hold on in the face of greatest adversity, misfortune and opposition. (v) Nirbhayataa—fearlessness, courage, bravery and an indomitable spirit. (vi) Aarogyataa—to be freed from diseases and illnesses, both mental as well as bodily. (vii) Ajaadyataa—the opposite of Jadataa; to be free from the negative trait of inertia, lethargy, depression, stagnation, lack of drive, initiative and will power. (viii) Vaakya-patutaa—to be an expert orator; speaking skills, eloquence, diplomacy, and wise and intelligent choice of the spoken word. (ix) Bhakti—to have steady and robust devotion, loyalty, dedication and conviction for one's chosen deity and faith. This quality, of course, comes under the category of spiritual assets also.

Other variations include the following qualities in this list of Nidhis because they are like an asset for a man which stand him in good stead in his life— (i) Sham—having self restraint and control; having peace, tranquility, serenity and quietness; being able to suppress desires, yearnings and natural instincts and impulses. (ii) Dam—tolerance, forbearance, fortitude. (iii) Upriti—renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement. (iv) Titksha—endurance, patience, fortitude, sufferance, equanimity. (v) Samadhan—the ability to find a solution, an answer to even the most vexing problem; lack of confusion or doubts; clarity of thoughts and conception. (vi) Shraddha—having faith, belief, conviction, reverence and devotion. (vii) Sakhya—friendship and the ability to co-exist with even one's adversary. (viii) Daya—kindness, compassion, graciousness. (ix) Atma Bodh—self-realisation and awareness about the true nature of one's conscious 'self', to be enlightened about the Atma, the pure consciousness, that resides inside one's inner self as his soul, as his Spirit.

Sometimes, the last Nidhi of 'Atma Bodh' is replaced with 'Seva' or the natural habit of serving others selflessly.

Faces of Hanuman—In iconography, Hanuman is depicted as having five, ten or eleven faces.

(a) The *five faces of Hanuman* are as follows—(i) in the eastern direction it is that of a monkey; (ii) in the southern direction it is that of Lord Nrisingh; (iii) in the western direction it is that of Lord Garuda; (iv) in the northern direction it is that of Lord Varaha; and (v) in the zenith it is that of Lord Hayagriva.

The genesis of the story is linked with the battle of Lanka when the son of the ten-headed Ravana, known as Mahi-Ravan, had kidnapped Ram and Laxman and hid them underground in the nether world. He prepared them to sacrifice to the goddess whom he worshipped in order to please the goddess so that his father Ravana could

win the war. When Hanuman got the wind of it, he went to the nether world and hid behind the idol of the goddess. The demon Mahi-Ravana offered all sorts of inedible things to the goddess—such as wine, excreta, meat, urine etc. He had his eyes closed in meditation. So Hanuman assumed this heads and ate up all the offerings. Finally, when the wicked demon thought that the sacrifice is finished and the goddess is happy with him, he was about to chop off the heads of the two brothers at the altar, Hanuman emerged from hiding in this ferocious form with five heads (or according to the previous narration with eleven unconventional heads) to kill the demon. It is believed that even Ram and Laxman could not recognize Hanuman in that form till the time they saw his monkey head with which he bowed before the Lord.

In essence we can say that Hanuman epitomised the glory of knowledge and the Shakti of the Supreme Brahm rolled into one. When he appeared to save Ram and Laxman from the clutches of Mahi-Ravana, he represented the supreme power of creation. This form of Hanuman—whether it is of five heads or nine heads or eleven heads—implies that all the fundamental forces of Nature had joined hands to get rid of or negate the negative forces that had become ascendant, and to restore the balance in favour of the positive forces and principles of creation.

The five faces of Hanuman stand for the following—(i) the five elements of creation, viz. sky, air, fire, water and earth. (ii) the five chief vital winds called Prans—viz. Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyaana and Udaana. This fits in perfectly with the fact that Hanuman is regarded as the son of the Wind God.

(b) The *ten or eleven faces of Hanuman*—According to another version, Hanuman is shown as having eleven or ten faces as follows—(i) in the eastern direction it is that of a monkey (Hanuman in his original form); (ii) in the south-east corner (called ‘Agneya Kona’) it is that of a Kshatriya (warrior class); (iii) in the southern direction it is that of Lord Nrisingh (half man and half lion incarnation of Vishnu); (iv) in the south-west corner (called ‘Nairitya Kona’) it is that of Lord Ganesh; (v) in the western direction it is that of Harishwar (Hari or Vishnu; or it can be interpreted as Hari’s Lord or Shiva in line with the term Rameshwar which is one of the forms of Shiva); (vi) in the north-west corner (called ‘Vaayabya Kona’) it is that of Lord Bhairav (one of the forms of Shiva); (vii) in the northern direction it is that of Varaha; (viii) in the north-east corner (called ‘Ishan Kona’) it is that of Lord Rudra (one of the forms of Shiva); and (ix) in the zenith corner (above; towards the sky) it is that of Lord Hayagriva (Lord Sun; Vishnu with a horse’s head; one of the many incarnations of Vishnu).

In this above description only nine faces are given; two are missing. The other two faces are that of Lord Garuda (mount of Vishnu) and Lord Shiva. In this version, the face on the west side is that of Garuda (instead of Harishwar), and Lord Varaha faces in the lower direction called nadir. The eleventh face is a combination of all the faces—i.e. it is the face of all-encompassing and all-incorporating Lord Isha.

The point to note here are that all these forms are manifestations or representations of the five or the eleven principal ‘Tattwas’ or the fundamental elements of creation. The eleven heads are symbols of the following Tattwas—the five elements (sky, air, fire, water and earth) + five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyaana and Udaana) + Chitta (mind and its sub-conscious). These eleven Tattwas form the basic units which combine together to form the physical body of any living being.

It will be noted that only nine specific heads are mentioned though the total number of heads are eleven. Well, the significance of the number ‘nine’ vis-à-vis the nine Tattwas is as follows—

‘The *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 14 says that there are nine Tattvas which are actually subtle revelations of the supreme Brahm. They are the following—The three fundamental Gunas, i.e. the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, the three basic characters of the Atma known as Sat-Chit-Anand, i.e. Sat (truth), Chitta (consciousness) and Anand (bliss), and the three forms of divinity represented by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the

sustainer, and Rudra the concluder of creation, represent the nine Tattwas of creation.'

The *Par Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 5 says that the sacred thread that is worn by Brahmins has three main strands, and each strand consists of three sub-strands. The total number of strands thus becomes nine ($3 \times 3 = 9$). These nine strands symbolically represent the nine Tattwas of creation which actually stand for the nine revelations of the same Brahm. The fact that the sacred thread has nine finer strands is endorsed in the Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 27.'

It must be remembered that Hanuman is not an ordinary soul, but he is the most enlightened One to have come on this earth. He is regarded as the leader in the community of the wise and enlightened ones. There is no wonder in it because of two reasons—one, he is Shiva personified, and Shiva is the most enlightened amongst the Trinity Gods, and second, his teacher was the Sun God who is personification of the Supreme Brahm, and his brilliant light is a metaphor of the immensity of knowledge and enlightenment he has as well as the light this knowledge provides to the world. Without knowledge this world would be engulfed in a thick shroud of darkness of ignorance symbolized by the night.

The importance of the figure five is of great metaphysical importance. It represents the Pancha Mahaabh. They were formed at the beginning of creation, and consist of earth, water or fluid, fire or energy, air or wind and sky or space elements in increasing degree of subtlety. They can be studied at two levels—one at the very core level, and the other at the more general level.

The study of the body at the core level of the five Bhuts consisting of the five primary elements consisting of the sky or space, air or wind, fire or energy, water or fluids, and earth. Refer verse nos. 1-2, and 5-6 of *Shaarirako-panishad*. Briefly, the earth element formed the solid part of the body, the water element formed the fluid part, the fire element formed the warmth and heat of the body, the movement of the body is revelation of the air element, and the subtle space between various organs and tissues of the body, both at the external as well as internal levels, is the sky element. The next level would be the various Koshas or Sheaths that are made of a combination of these five elements. They are the following—Anna Maye Kosh (the food sheath), Pran Maye Kosh (the vital wind sheath), Manomaye Kosh (the mind sheath), Vigyan Maye Kosh (the intellect sheath), and Anand Maye Kosh (the bliss sheath). These Koshas are also like the elements or units that decide the complexities of the creature's body and its position in the hierarchy of evolution.

All the living organisms can be classified into the following five types depending upon the number of Koshas they have—(i) Udbhij—these are those life forms that are born from seeds, such as members of the plant kingdom. These have only one Kosha, the Anna Maye Kalaa. In other words, they depend on food and become food for others higher up in the evolutionary ladder. (ii) Swedaj—they are those which are born from dampness and sweat, such as fungi, algae, bacteria, germs, mosquito, lice, flies etc. They have two Koshas, viz. Anna Maye and Pran Maye. That is, they are formed from food, they live for food and they die as food. Besides this, they also exhibit signs of life, e.g. the mosquito and lice have life like any other member of the animal kingdom. (iii) Andaj—they are placed higher up in the evolutionary ladder, and are born from eggs, whether inside the mother's womb or outside. Such birds as pigeon, sparrow, parrot, peacock etc. come under this category. They have three Koshas which are Anna Maye, Pran Maye and Mano-maye. The last Kosh refers to the fact that such creatures have a mind and heart which enables them to think, albeit in a primitive level. (iv) Jaruyuj—these are the creatures that are born as embryo that develops inside the mother's womb. Under this class come the animals such as horses, cows, dogs, elephants etc. They have four Koshas, such as Anna Maye, Pran Maye, Mano-maye and Vigyan Maye. The last Kosh refers to their ability to have a higher level of thinking ability called intelligence. The human being comes under this

last category with the added benefit of having five Koshas. Besides the four Koshas mentioned above in other creatures of this category, the man has the fifth one and it called the Anand Maye Kosh. It is only possessed by a man and not by other creatures in the sense that the man can realise the true meaning of the terms ‘bliss and happiness that is eternal and substantial’ by the virtue of his attaining higher level of intelligence and his ability to delve into the secrets of the concept of truth itself and then realising that kind of happiness and bliss that is not superficial and which is not limited to enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the body and the material comforts of the world, but which has a holistic and all-inclusive dimension that incorporates the spirit or the soul.

¹**Udita caṇḍakara-maṇḍala-grāsakatrtā:** According to the Valmiki Ramayan, the child Hanuman became exceedingly hungry one morning. Seeing the rising sun and thinking it to be some ripe red fruit, he leapt in the sky to gobble it. As it happened, it also was the day of solar eclipse when the sun is eaten by the trunk-less Rahu. When the latter arrived for his meal, he found that there was no sun (because Hanuman had already put it in his mouth). Rahu went to Indra to complain, and both of them rushed to the site. Seeing them, Hanuman leapt at them to eat Rahu (according to some legends, he was lured by the large, fan-like waving ears of Erawat elephant, the mount of Indra). Then, Indra hit him with his Bajra, breaking his chin, and in the process, breaking the Bajra also. Since then, the child was called Hanuman (the one with a broken chin).

²**Incarnation of Rudra (rudra-avatāra):** Once Shiva prayed to Sri Ram that he wanted to serve him as his servant. So, the former manifested himself as Hanuman during Sri Ram's incarnation. Another name of Shiva is Rudra. Hence Hanuman is referred to as Rudravatar (i.e., incarnation of Rudra).

³**Hanuman, the Protector of Sugriv and Jamvant (jayati sugrīva ṛkṣādi rakṣaṇa-nipuṇa):** Sun was the preceptor and teacher (Guru) of Hanuman. As ‘Gurudakshina’ (the token amount of money or a promise that the student gives to his teacher in return for his education; in modern parlance—the fees), the sun took a vow from him that he should protect his son Sugriv during Sri Ram's incarnation. (When the various Gods took the forms of monkeys and bears in order to serve Sri Ram, Sun had manifested as Sugriv, the brother of Bali).

⁴**Hanuman, the one who played an instrumental role in the slaying of Baali (bāli balaśāli-badha-mukhyahētū):** When Sri Ram had gone to Mt. Rishyamuk while searching for Sita, he first met Hanuman who introduced and befriended him to Sugriv, which friendship was responsible for the slaying of Bali. Hence, Hanuman is also called the main protagonist in Bali's death.

⁵**Hanuman, the slayer of demoness Singhika (sinha sinhikā-mada-mathana):** A demoness called Singhika lived in the ocean. She could trap (catch) overflying objects by holding their shadow in the water. [A remarkable analogue of the modern day Radar.] When Hanuman was on his way to Lanka in search of Sita, she tried to catch him, at which she was killed by a single clenched fist-blow by Hanuman.

⁶**Rajanicara-nagara-utpāta-kētū:** Hanuman is compared to a comet here because he arrived in the darkness of night and appeared to be like a streak of light against the darkness of the night sky. The demons thought that he was some kind of comet, and so thinking it to be a bad omen they preferred to look away. This is the reason no one paid heed when Hanuman landed on the soil of Lanka.

⁷**Bhūnandinī-śōca-mōcana:** Sita is called ‘Bhu-nandini’, meaning the ‘daughter of mother Earth’, because she was born out of earth. This story is narrated in *Adbhut Ramayan*, Canto 8, verse nos. 36-44; and in detail in *Adhyatma Ramayan* of Veda Vyas, in its Baal Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 58-to-75. Sita was abducted by the demon king Ravana of Lanka. In captivity, Sita suffered a lot. Hanuman arrived at Lanka and met her with the finger-ring of Lord Ram which he had bought for her. His arrival marked a new phase of hope and redemption for her. She derived immense succour and solace by Hanuman’s visit. He helped her overcome her distressed and miserable condition, kindling hope of rescue in her heart.

⁸**Daśakaṇṭha-ghaṭakaṇṭha-vārida-nāda:** Ravana was the demon king of Lanka who had stolen Lord Ram’s wife, Sita. Kumbhakaraṇ was Ravana’s brother. Meghnad was Ravana’s son. Their death in the war of Lanka has been elaborately described in all the versions of the epic story of ‘Ramayana’. Tulsidas has narrated this story in Lanka Kand of all his three books that describe the story of the Ramayana: viz. *Ram Charit Manas*, *Geetawali* and *Kavitawali*.

In Tulsidas’ book “*Kavitawali*”, Lanka Kand, verse no. 40, Lord Ram has himself told Laxman, the Lord’s younger brother and comrade-in-arm that it was Hanuman who was the one actually fighting the war in the battle-field of Lanka. The valour, the courage and the marvelous deeds of Hanuman in the battle-field of Lanka has been very vividly described in *Kavitawali*, Lanka Kand, verse nos. 32—48.

During the Ram-Ravana war the demon Ravana performed a fire sacrifice, which, if completed, would have made him invincible. On being informed by Vibhishan, Hanuman went there with a small detachment of his troops and defiled/interrupted the fire sacrifice. Since Ravana could not complete the fire sacrifice, his defeat and death in the final battle became a certainty. Hence, it is said that Hanuman was instrumental, or rather the main reason, why Ravana could be killed. This is clearly mentioned in Tulsidas’ epic *Ram Charit Manas*, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85.

Besides this, some of the great duals of the war were fought by Hanuman—refer for instance, *Ram Charit Manas*, Lanka Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precedes Doha no. 51 (Hanuman and Meghnad); (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 65 (Hanuman and Kumbhakaraṇ); (iii) Doha no. 83 and its following Chaupai line nos. 1-4 (Hanuman and Ravana); (iv) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 and Chanda line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 95 (Hanuman and Ravana).

During the battle with Kumbhakaraṇ, Hanuman had played a valiant role and helped Lord Ram to kill this demon—refer: Tulsidas’ epic *Ram Charit Manas*, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 65.

Likewise, Hanuman had been pivotal in the killing of Meghnad. There are two reasons for this. One is that Hanuman and other chief monkey warriors had succeeded in stopping Meghnad from doing a fire sacrifice that would have made him immune to defeat and death—refer *Ram Charit Manas*, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 75—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 76. In this context it is clearly mentioned that in the ensuing battle, Hanuman had a fierce battle with Meghnad—refer: Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-9 that precedes Doha no. 76.

Earlier, Meghnad had severely wounded Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram whom the Lord had deputed to slay Meghnad. Laxman fell unconscious in the battle-field. Then it was Hanuman who brought the Sanjivani herb (a life-reviving herb) to help Laxman get back his consciousness. Later on, Laxman had killed Meghnad. Had Laxman not been revived, Meghnad would not have been killed. Hence, Hanuman is also called the slayer of Meghnad because he had played an important role in reviving Meghnad’s nemesis Laxman. This story is narrated in *Ram Charit Manas*, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 54—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 62.

⁹Kālinēmi-hantā: Hanuman, the slayer of Kalnemi: Kalnemi was a very cunning trickster in Ravana's camp. Ravana had asked Kalnemi to stop Hanuman while the latter was on his way to the northern mountains to bring the herb that would revive Laxman back to life. Kalnemi had disguised himself as a hermit and created a charming hermitage with a garden and pond where he waited for Hunuman. When Hanuman saw this garden as he flew north towards the mountains, he came there to refresh himself and drink some water to quench his thirst. Kalnemi tried to poison Hanuman by offering him water from his pot, which the latter refused, saying that first he wished to take a bath in the pond in the garden. There, a crocodile, who was actually a cursed soul, tried to catch hold of Hanuman's foot and drag him in the water. When Hanuman killed this crocodile, it revealed its true identity and told him the truth about Kalnemi. So, Hanuman came back and killed this demon. This story is narrated in Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 58.]

(26)

जयति मर्कटाधीश, मृगराज—विक्रम, महादेव, मुद—मंगलालय, कपाली ।
 मोह—मद—क्रोध—कामादि—खल—संकुला, घोर संसार—निषि किरणमाली ।।1।।
 जयति लसदंजनाऽदितिज, कपि—केसरी—कश्यप—प्रभव, जगदार्तिहर्ता ।
 लोक—लोकप—कोक—कोकनद—शोकहर, हंस हनुमान कल्याणकर्ता ।।2।।
 जयति सुविशाल—विकराल—विग्रह, वज्रसार सर्वांग भुजदंड भारी ।
 कुलिषनख, दशनवर लसत, बालधि बृहद, वैरि—शस्त्रास्त्रधर कुधरधारी ।।3।।
 जयति जानकी—शोच—संताप—मोचन, राम—लक्ष्मणानंद—वारिज—विकासी ।
 कीष—कौतुक—केलि लूम—लंका—दहन, दलन कानन तरुण तेजरासी ।।4।।
 जयति पाथोधि—पाषाण—जलयानकर, यातुधान—प्रचुर—हर्ष—हाता ।
 दुष्ट रावण—कुंभकर्ण—पाकारिजित—मर्मभित्, कर्म—परिपाक—दाता ।।5।।
 जयति भुवनैकभूषण, विभीषणवरद, विहित कृत राम—संग्राम साका ।
 पुष्पकारुढ सौमित्रि—सीता—सहित, भानु—कुलभानु—कीरति—पताका ।।6।।
 जयति पर—यंत्रमंत्राभिचार—ग्रसन, कारमन—कूट—कृत्यादि—हंता ।
 षाकिनी—डाकिनी—पूतना—प्रेत—वेताल—भूत—प्रमथ—यूथ—यंता ।।7।।
 जयति वेदान्तविद विविध—विद्या—विषद, वेद—वेदांगविद ब्रह्मवादी ।
 ज्ञान—विज्ञान—वैराग्य—भाजन विभो, विमल गुण गनति षुकनारदादी ।।8।।
 जयति काल—गुण—कर्म—माया—मथन, निश्चलज्ञान, व्रत—सम्यरत, धर्मचारी ।
 सिद्ध—सुरवृंद—योगींद्र—सेवित सदा, दास तुलसी प्रणत भय—तमारी ।।9।।

(26)

jayati markatādhīśa, mṛgarāja-vikrama, mahādēva, muda-maṅgalālaya,
 kapālī.
 mōha-mada-krōdha-kāmādi-khala-saṅkulā, ghōra sansāra-nīśi kiraṇamālī. 1.
 jayati lasadanjanādītija, kapi-kēsari-kaśyapa-prabhava, jagadātrtinhatrtā.
 lōka-lōkapa-kōka-kōkanada-śōkahara, hansa hanumāna kalyāṇakatrtā. 2.
 jayati suvisāla-vikarāla-vigraha, vajrasāra sarvāṅga bhujadaṇḍa bhārī.
 kulīśanakha, daśanavara lasata, bāladhi bṛhada, vairi-śaśāśādhara
 kudharadhārī. 3.
 jayati jānakī-śōca-santāpa-mōcana, rāma-lakṣmaṇānanda-vārija-vikāśī.

kīśa-kautuka-kēli lūma-laṅkā-dahana, dalana kānana taruṇa tējarāsī. 4.
 jayati pāthōdhi-pāṣāṇa-jalayānakara, yātudhāna-pracura-harṣa-hātā.
 duṣṭa rāvaṇa-kumbhakarṇa-pākārijita-marmabhit, karma-paripāka-dātā. 5.
 jayati bhuvanaikabhūṣaṇa, vibhīṣaṇavarada, vihita kṛta rāma-saṅgrāma sākā.
 puṣpakārūrha saumitri-sītā-sahita, bhānu-kulabhānu-kīrati-patākā. 6.
 jayati para-yantramantṛābhicāra-grasana, kāramana-kūṭa-kṛtyādi-hantā.
 śākinī-ḍākinī-pūtanā-prēta-vētāla-bhūta-pramatha-yūtha-yantā . 7.
 jayati vēdāntavida vividha-vidyā-viśada, vēda-vēdāṅgavida brahmavādī.
 jñāna-vijñāna-vairāgya-bhājana vibhō, vimala guṇa ganati śukanārādādī. 8.
 jayati kāla-guṇa-karma-māyā-mathana, niścalajñāna, vrata-samyarata,
 dharmacārī.
 sid'dha-suravaṁṛda-yōgīndra-sēvita sadā, dāsa tulasī praṇata bhaya-tamārī.
 9.

Verse no. 26—Oh Hanuman! Glory to you! You are the king of monkeys, have valour like that of a lion, are the best among the Gods, are an abode of bliss and auspiciousness, and are the manifestation of the skull-bearing Lord (Shiva). You are like a sun to dispel or eliminate the darkness that surrounds this world like a dark shroud of the night symbolizing Moha (delusions and worldly attachment), Mada (pride, vanity, arrogance, hypocrisy), Krodh (anger), Kaam (lust, passions and other worldly vices) etc. (1).

Glory to you! You are born out of the union of Anjani, who is like Aditi (the mother of all Gods), and the monkey king known as Kesari, who is like the first male known as Kashyap. You are the dispeller or eliminator of the troubles, miseries, ordeals and concerns related to the world. You are like the sun which is a personification of the glorious virtues that remove the agony and grief of the bird-couple known as Chakva and Chakvi (male and female ostrich; the ruddy-goose) who symbolize the world and its custodians known as Lokpals respectively, as well as that of the lotus (because the lotus opens itself early morning at the sight of the sun as if its troubles of the previous night when there was darkness all around has ended). (2).

Glory to you! Your body is very large and awesome. Every part of it is as strong as Vajra (the weapon of Indra, and made of the hardest element in existence; the thunderbolt). Your arms are heavy (robust and muscular). Your teeth and nails, which are as strong as Vajra, look very wonderful. Your tail is very long. And you are armed with various types of invincible arms, strong weapons and huge mountains for the purpose of slaying (or conquering, defeating, crushing) the enemy. (3).

Glory to you! You are the dispeller of Janki's (Sita's) worries, consternations, sorrows and agonies, and help the lotus of Lord Ram's and Laxman's happiness to bloom. You are the one who had playfully burnt the city of Lanka with your burning tail in a manner that is a natural playful habit of monkeys. You had uprooted the whole of Ashok Grove in Lanka. And you are a personification of the brilliant splendour of the mid-day sun. (4).

Glory to you! You are the one who had built a stone bridge across the ocean, are the one who played spoil-sport for the demons and ruined their life of pleasures, and are

the giver of justice (punishment; retribution) to Ravana, Kumbhkarna and Meghnad for their sins. (5).

Glory to you! You are the gem (glory and the honour) of all the Bhuvans (worlds). You gave the boon of Ram's devotion to Vibhishan. You did stupendous deeds and performed marvelous feats along side Lord Ram in the battle-field (at Lanka). You are the flag-bearer of the fame, the glory and the majesty of the sun of the Solar Race (Lord Ram) as he sat on the Pushpak-plane with Saumitra (Laxman, his brother) and Sita after achieving victory at Lanka. [This refers to the time when the Lord was just about to embark upon the journey back to Ayodhya after conquering Lanka.] (6).

Glory to you! You can swallow (i.e. nullify or neutralize the bad or negative effects of) black magic done by enemies using various magical charms and formulas. You are the destroyer of the evil designs of Satan, as well as the death-knells personified as various malignant (unfavourable) goddesses. Indeed, you control and rule over phantoms, evil spirits, ghosts, hobgoblins, ogres, vampires and other terrible creatures of their ilk. (7).

Glory to you! You are expert in Vedant (Upanishads; the essential knowledge of Vedas), are well-versed in many other types of knowledge, and are learned in the four Vedas and the six Vedangs (organs or sub-divisions or branches of Vedas)¹. You are well-versed in the knowledge of Brahm (the supreme and absolute Truth and cosmic Consciousness), and therefore you not only are competent to elucidate upon it with utmost finery but also portray this eclectic spiritual stature in your own life, thoughts and demeanours. You are the store house or a receptacle of the grand virtues of wisdom, erudition, truthful knowledge, metaphysics, dispassion and renunciation. This is why sages Narad and Shukdeo and other such great saints always sing your glories. (8).

Glory to you! You can destroy or overcome the effects of Kaal (era; time; death; circumstance; compulsions of day-hour-moment), Triguna (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas), Karma (deeds and their accumulated consequences, both good and bad), and Maya (worldly delusions and its hallucinating effect). Your enlightenment, self-realisation, wisdom, erudition and knowledge are steady and of the highest order of purity and perfection. You are a diligent follower of the eclectic virtues of truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, auspiciousness, righteousness, scrupulousness, nobility, probity and propriety. Siddhas (the realised ones; the mystics), the Gods and great Yogis (ascetics) always serve (honour and worship) you. Oh the one who is like the sun for the purpose of eliminating the fear of darkness representing this fearful mortal world full of horrors! This humble servant Tulsidas is always at your feet (i.e. he has taken a permanent shelter in your holy feet, and seeks your blessing and patronage). (9).

[Note—¹The six “Vedangas” are the following—Shiksha (deals with learning the hymns and how to chant them), Vyaakarana (grammar), Chandas (poetical styles of composition), Nirukta (meaning and explanation of Vedic texts), Jyotisha (astrology and astronomy) and Kalpa (formula or aphorisms called the Sutra). The Kalpa has 4 branches—viz. Shrauta, Grihya, Dharma and Shulba. This deals with all sacrificial rites and even those that are done at home by an individual householder.]

(27)

जयति मंगलागार, संसारभारापहर, वानराकारविग्रह पुरारी ।
 राम-रोषानल-ज्वालमाला-मिष ध्वांतचर-सलभ-संहारकारी ।।1।।
 जयति मरुदंजनामोद-मंदिर, नतग्रीव सुग्रीव-दुःखैकबंधो ।
 यातुधानोद्धत-क्रुद्ध-कालाग्निहर, सिद्ध-सुर-सज्जनानंद-सिंधो ।।2।।
 जयति रुद्राग्रणी, विश्व-वंद्याग्रणी, विश्वविख्यात-भट-चक्रवर्ती ।
 सामगाताग्रणी कामजेताग्रणी, रामहित रामभक्तानुवर्ती ।।3।।
 जयति संग्रामजय, रामसंदेसहर, कौशला-कुशल-कल्याणभाषी ।
 राम-विरहार्क-संतप्त-भरतादि-नरनारि-शीतलकरण कल्पशाषी ।।4।।
 जयति सिंहासनासीन सीतारमण, निरखि निर्भरहरष नृत्यकारी ।
 राम संभ्राज षोभा-सहित सर्वदा तुलसिमानस-रामपुर-बिहारी ।।5।।

(27)

jayati maṅgalāgāra, sansārabhārāpahara, vānarākāravigraha purārī.
 rāma-rōṣānala-jvālamālā-miṣa dhvāntacara-salabha-sanhārakārī. 1.
 jayati marudaṅjanāmōda-mandira, natagrīva sugrīva-duḥkhaikabandhō.
 yātudhānōd'dhata-krud'dha-kālāgnihara, sid'dha-sura-sajjanānanda-sindhō. 2.
 jayati rudrāgraṇī, viśva-vandyāgraṇī, viśvavikhyāta-bhaṭa-cakravartī.
 sāmagātāgraṇī kāmajētāgraṇī, rāmahita rāmabhaktānuvartī. 3.
 jayati saṅgrāmajaya, rāmasandēsahara, kauśalā-kuśala-kalyāṇabhāṣī.
 rāma-virahārka-santapta-bharatādi-naranāri-śītalakaraṇa kalpaśāṣī. 4.
 jayati sinhāsanāsīna sītāramaṇa, nirakhi nirbharaharaṣa nṛtyakārī.
 rāma sambhrāja śōbhā-sahita sarvadā tulasimānasa-rāmapura-bihārī. 5.

Verse no. 27—Oh Hanuman! Glory to you! You are an abode of auspiciousness and welfare, an abolisher or vanquisher of the burden of the world, and are the eternal and sublime Lord Purari (Shiva) himself in the physical gross form of a monkey. You are the personification of the wrathful flame of the ferocious fire representing the anger of Lord Ram which burns to ashes the insect-like demons. (1).

Glory to you! You are a fount of joy for (your parents) Anjani (your mother) and the Wind-God (your father). You had helped Sugriv like a true friend during his adverse time of trials and sorrows when his head was bowed with worries and shame. You have doused the doomsday-like fire of the demons' wrath (that they unleashed on the world), and are like an ocean of joys and happiness for mystics, hermits, sages, Gods and gentlemen. (2).

Glory to you! You are the most exalted and chief among the eleven Rudras (the various forms of Shiva) as well as among the wise and learned ones who are honoured and revered by the world. You are like a famous Emperor of all the bravest of warriors in this world. You are the best among those who recite the Sam Veda, as well as those who can overcome Kamdeo (lust/desires/passions). [That is, you are very learned and an expert in the Vedas as well as the one who practices exemplary self-restraint.] You are the well-wisher of Lord Ram and stay with his devotees to protect them. (3).

Glory to you! You win a sure victory in the battle-field. You are the one who took the message of Lord Ram to Sita and eliminated her sorrows and agonies by conveying the good news of the wellbeing of the Lord of Kaushal (Lord Ram) to her. You are like the Kalpa tree to remove the pain, the agony and grief of separation from Lord Ram that Bharat and other subjects of Ayodhya were suffering from by conveying the good news of the Lord to them at Ayodhya (at the time of the Lord's return from exile). (4).

Glory to you! When you saw the beloved Lord of Sita (i.e. Lord Ram) on the throne of Ayodhya (crowned as its emperor), you had danced in ecstasy and extreme joy. Even as Lord Ram looked magnificent and glorious after being crowned the king of Ayodhya and adorned its throne, you should also reside in the Ayodhya of this Tulsidas' mind and thoughts forever! (5).

(28)

जयति वात-संजात, विख्यातविक्रम, बृहद्बाहु, बलबिपुल, बालधिबिसाला ।
जातरुपाचलाकारविग्रह, लसल्लोम विद्युल्लता ज्वालमाला ।।1।।
जयति बालार्क वर-वदन, पिङ्गल-नयन, कपिश-कर्कश-जटाजूटधारी ।
विकट भृकुटी, वज्र दशन नख, वैरि-मदमत्त-कुंजर-पुंज-कुंजरारी ।।2।।
जयति भीमार्जुन-व्यालसूदन-गर्वहर, धनंजय-रथ-त्राण-केतू ।
भीष्म-द्रोण-कर्णादि-पालित, कालदृक् सुयोधन-चमू-निधन-हेतू ।।3।।
जयति गतराजदातार, हंतार संसार-संकट, दनुज-दर्पहारी ।
ईति अति भीति-ग्रह-प्रेत-चौरानल-व्याधिबाधा-शमन घोर मारी ।।4।।
जयति निगमागम व्याकरण करण लिपि, काव्य कौतुक-कला-कोटि-सिंधो ।
सामगायक, भक्त-कामदायक, वामदेव, श्रीराम-प्रिय-प्रेम-बंधो ।।5।।
जयति धर्माशु-संदग्ध-संपाति नवपक्ष-लोचन-दिव्य-देहदाता ।
कालकलि-पापसंताप-संकुल सदा, प्रणत तुलसीदास तात-माता ।।6।।

(28)

jayati vāta-sanjāta, vikhyātavikrama, bṛhadbāhu, balabipula, bāladhibisālā.
jātarupācalākāravigraha, lasallōma vidyullatā jvālamālā. 1.
jayati bālārka vara-vadana, piṅgala-nayana, kapiśa-karkaśa-jaṭājūṭadhārī.
vikaṭa bhr̥kuṭī, vajra daśana nakha, vairi-madamatta-kunjara-punja-kunjarārī.
2.
jayati bhīmārjuna-vyālasūdana-garvahara, dhananājaya-ratha-trāṇa-kētū.
bhīṣma-drōṇa-karṇādi-pālita, kāladṛka suyōdhana-camū-nidhana-hētū. 3.
jayati gatarājadātāra, hantāra sansāra-saṅkaṭa, danuja-darpahārī.
īti ati bhīti-graha-prēta-cairānala-vyādhībādhā-śamana ghōra mārī. 4.
jayati nigamāgama vyākaraṇa karaṇa lipi, kāvya kautuka-kalā-kōṭi-sindhō.
sāmagāyaka, bhakta-kāmadāyaka, vāmadēva, śrīrāma-priya-prēma-bandhō.
5.
jayati dharmānśu-sandagdha-sampāti navapakṣa-lōcana-divya-dēhadātā.

kālakali-pāpasantāpa-saṅkula sadā, praṇata tulasīdāsa tāta-mātā. 6.

Verse no. 28—Oh Hanuman! Glory to you! You have been born of the Wind-God, and your renowned valour, strength and glories are famous in this world. Your arms are very large (broad, muscular, robust and strong), and your strength and might are measureless. Your tail is very long. Your body is as colossus as Mt. Sumeru as well as most radiant and full of energy. The hairs of your body are simmering like the flame of a fire, or appear to be gleaming like a glimmering garland (row) of brilliant flames. (1).

Glory to you! Your face is as beautiful as a rising sun. Your eyes have a yellow hue. Your head has a lock of matted grey hairs tied in a bun. Your eye-brows are curved (like a bow). Your teeth and nails are as hard and strong as Vajra (thunderbolt, the strong and formidable weapon of Indra). You are like a lion that single-handedly is able to disrupt a herd of wild and rogue elephants. (2).

Glory to you! You are the one who removed the pride, vanity, arrogance and ego of Arjun (who thought that he is invincible, and the best and bravest warrior), Bhimsen (that he is extremely strong)¹ and Garuda (the mount of Vishnu, who thought that he is very swift in speed)². You sat on the war-standard of Arjun and protected his chariot (during the Mahabharat war)³. You are the main factor that brought about the destruction of the ferocious and formidable army of Duryodhan, which was like Kaal (death personified) for the Pandavas, and was protected by such ace warriors as Bhishma Pitamaha, Dronacharya and Karna. (3).

Glory to you! You had restored the lost kingdom (of Kishkindha) to Sugriv. You are the one who eliminates all the troubles, the tribulations, the miseries, the ordeals and the concerns pertaining to this world. You are the vanquisher of the pride, vanity, arrogance and haughtiness of the demons. You are the eliminator of and protector from of all types of calamitous events which create hurdles in the harvest, such events as excess rainfall, drought, locusts, rats, birds and attacks from enemies, as well as the six types of formidable obstacles such as premature death, great fear from uncertainties, malignant stars, ghosts, evil spirits, thief, fire, disease, plague/pestilence and other epidemics etc. (4).

Glory to you! You are the one who has written expert commentaries on the Vedas, scriptures and grammar as well as on literature. You are an ocean (a treasury) of immeasurable talents and skills. You have sung the Sam Veda, and have fulfilled the needs and desires of your devotees. You are a true personification of Lord Vamdeo (Shiva). You are the dearest and the most beloved friend and companion of Lord Sri Ram. (5).

Glory to you! You had restored (i.e. you were instrumental in restoring) the wings, the eyes and a healthy body of Sampati which had earlier been scorched by the rays of the sun⁴. [Sampati was a vulture and brother of Jatayu who had fought valiantly with Ravana in a vain attempt to prevent him from abducting Sita, had lost his wings in the process, and had subsequently died, cradled in the arms of Lord Ram.]

You are like a parent for this Tulsidas who has taken shelter with you as he is gravely tormented and agonized and horrified by the sins and other horrors created by Kaliyug. (6).

[Note—¹⁺³The remover of pride of Bhim and Arjun (bhīmārjuna-garvahara): During the exile period of the Pandavas, once the great, valorous and strong Bhim, who was very proud of his great strength, saw an old monkey lying in his way. The former asked the latter to move out of the way, at which the monkey asked him to lift his tail and put it aside as he was too old to move. Bhim tried all his might but the tail didn't budge. This demolished Bhim's vanity and haughtiness.

Similarly, during the Mahabarat war, Hanuman sat atop the war standard of Arjun's chariot, but the latter was unaware of it. During the Arjun-Karna duel, the arrow of Arjun pushed Karna's chariot far back but Karna's arrows could push Arjun's chariot only a fraction. In spite of that, Sri Krishna praised Karna's arrows and his expertise at archery. Arjun felt disgruntled and indignant at Krishna's partial attitude at praising the enemy (Karna). To teach Arjun a lesson and vanquish his self-righteous proud demeanour, Sri Krishna asked Hanuman to leave the chariot for sometime. The next arrow of Karna pushed Arjun's chariot miles back. Stunned and perplexed, Arjun was informed by Krishna that it was Hanuman who had made his chariot stable—the very fact that it even backed by an inch by Karna's arrow was a miracle in itself. This episode removed Arjun's sense of false pride and vanity.

²Byal-Sudan (vyālasūdāna): Vishnu's mount Garud, the eagle, was very proud of its speed. Once, Sri Krishna asked it to go and call Hanuman. When Garud reached Hanuman and ask him to accompany him, Hanuman replied, 'I will reach where Sri Krishna is before you.' Garud was surprised, and flew to where Krishna was with the greatest of speed. But when he reached there, he found Hanuman already with Krishna. This demolished Garud's Vanity of being the fastest creature in the world.

⁴Restorer of Sampati's eyes and wings (sarpāti navapakṣa-lōcana-divya-dēhadātā): Sampati was the younger brother of Jatāu, the king of vultures. Once in childish competition, they rushed towards the sun playfully. The elder brother Jatāu realised that he would be burnt, so he aborted the flight, but Sampati was arrogant and he continued with the flight. On reaching the vicinity of the sun, his wings got burnt, and he fell down on Mt. Malyawan. During the search for Sita, it was he (Sarpāti) who told the monkeys about her location at Lanka. By Hanuman's intercession, Sampati got back his wings and eye-sight, and attained emancipation. Hence, Hanuman has been called the restorer of Sampati's eyes and wings.]

(29)

जयति निर्भरानंद—संदोह कपिकेसरी, केसरी—सुवन भुवनैकभर्ता ।
 दिव्य भूम्यंजना—मंजुलाकर—मणे, भक्त—संताप—चिंतापहर्ता ।।1।।
 जयति धर्मार्थ—कामापवर्गद विभो, ब्रह्मलोकादि—वैभव—विरागी ।
 वचन—मानस—कर्म सत्य—धर्मव्रती, जानकीनाथ—चरणानुरागी ।।2।।
 जयति बिहगेष—बलबुद्धि—बेगाति—मद—मथन, मनमथ—मथन, ऊर्ध्वरेता ।
 महानाटक—निपुण, कोटि—कविकुल—तिलक, गानगुण—गर्व—गंधर्व—जेता ।।3।।
 जयति मंदोदरी—केश—कर्षण, विद्यमान दशकंठ भट—मुकुट मानी ।
 भूमिजा—दुःख संजात—रोषांतकृत जातना जंतु कृत जातुधानी ।।4।।
 जयति रामायण—श्रवण—संजात—रोमांच, लोचन सजल, शिथिल वाणी ।

रामपदपद्म—मकरंद—मधुकर, पाहि, दास तुलसी शरण, शूलपाणी ।। 5 ।।

(29)

jayati nirbharānanda-sandōha kapikēsari, kēsari-suvana bhuvanaikabhatrtā.
divya bhūmyanjanā-manjulākara-manē, bhakta-santāpa-cintāpahatrtā. 1.
jayati dharmārtha-kāmāpavargada vibhō, brahmalōkādi-vaibhava-virāgī.
vacana-mānasa-karma satya-dharmavratī, jānakīnātha-caraṇānurāgī. 2.
jayati bihagēṣa-balabud'dhi-bēgāti-mada-mathana, manamatha-mathana,
ūdhrvarētā.
mahānāṭaka-nipuna, kōṭi-kavikula-tilaka, gānaguṇa-garva-gandharva-jētā. 3.
jayati mandōdarī-kēśa-karṣaṇa, vidyamāna daśakaṇṭha bhaṭa-mukuṭa mānī.
bhūmijā-duḥkha sanjāta-rōṣāntakṛta jātanā jantu kṛta jātudhānī. 4.
jayati rāmāyaṇa-śravaṇa-sanjāta-rōmānca, lōcana sajala, śithila vāṇī.
rāmapadapaṇ-makaranda-madhukara, pāhi, dāsa tulasī śaraṇa, śūlapāṇī. 5.

Verse no. 29—Oh Hanuman! Glory to you! You are an ocean of unadulterated, wholesome and eternal bliss. You are like a lion amongst the monkeys, are the son of Kesari (Kesari also means lion), and are the only sustainer, nourisher, protector and care-taker of the world. You are a magnificent gem (i.e. a son) that has emerged (taken birth) from the mine (womb) of, and nourished by, the radiant (fertile) soil (blood) of Anjani. You always dispel the numerous concerns that torment your devotees; you eliminate all their woes, worries, sufferings, ordeals, agonies, miseries, troubles and tribulations from which they suffer. (1).

Oh Vibho (one who is omnipresent, majestic, almighty, all pervading and eternal)! Glory to you! You are a bestower of the (four fruits of) Artha (material wellbeing and prosperity), Dharma (the eclectic virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety), Kaam (fulfillment of all desires) and Moksha (emancipation and salvation; liberation and deliverance). In spite of your ability to give all things desired by others, you remain a perfect renunciate yourself, being completely detached from, dispassionate towards and uninterested in any of the astoundingly magnificent charms and great objects of pleasure and comfort that are present anywhere in creation, even in the heavens called the Brahma Loka which is the best in the world. [That is, in spite of your being a metaphoric treasury of these divine treasures enumerate herein above, you remain aloof from them and un-moved by their charms.] You truly and faithfully follow the path of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness, scrupulousness, purity, propriety, probity and nobility). And you are a great and affectionate devotee of the holy feet of the Lord of Janki (i.e. Lord Ram). (2).

Glory to you! You had destroyed (crushed, abolished, vanquished) the great pride, vanity, arrogance and haughtiness that Garuda (mount of Vishnu) had regarding his strength, wisdom, intelligence and speed. You are eternally celibate like an innocent child, and are the one who has conquered Kamdeo (the patron God of love, passion, desire, lust). You are an expert in creating, staging and acting in big dramas and plays (that artfully and expertly depict various events in a creature's destiny)¹. You are the chief amongst the community of millions of great poets and bards, and can have

victory over Gandharvas (celestial musicians) who are proud of their talent in singing. (3).

Glory to you! You are like the crown jewel among warriors. You are the one who had the courage and the valour of pulling Mandodari by her hairs in front of her husband, the most haughty and arrogant Ravana (the demon king of Lanka). Seeing the agonies, miserable condition and sorrows of Bhumiya (literally the one who took birth from the earth; here referring to Sita who was held captive in Lanka) you had become so wrathful, angry, resentful and agitated that you had punished the demons severely and scornfully like Yam (the god of death and hell) does to sinful persons (at the time of death). (4).

Glory to you! Your body is thrilled, your eyes are filled with tears of joy and affection, and your speech overflows with emotions as soon as you hear the stories of Lord Ram being narrated as it is described in the epic Ramayana. You are like a bumble-bee who is enamoured and captivated by the lure of the nectar of Lord Ram's lotus-like feet. Oh trident-holding Lord (Shiva) in the form of Hanuman! This humble servant Tulsidas has taken refuge and shelter in your holy feet; protect him; give him solace and succour. (5).

[Note—¹Hanuman, the expert in composing the great 'play' (Hanuman Natak) (mahānāṭaka-nipuna): Hanuman was matchless in literature and music. Legend has it that he wrote the story of Sri Ram in great detail in a 'play' format, but finding no one worthy of it, he threw the manuscript in the ocean. Later on, its stray parts were retrieved by a Pundit called Damodar Misra and he pieced together the play called 'Hanuman-Natak' based on it.

Or else, the phrase 'mahānāṭaka-nipuna' may also mean that 'you are an expert artist who plays his designated role in the staging of great epics to absolute perfection like a skilled craftsman or artisan'. This of course refers to the stellar role that Hanuman played in the epic story of the Ramayana. Though he was an incarnation of Lord Rudra, the eleventh form of Shiva, yet no one could know about his real identity because he played his part as a monkey warrior very perfectly.]

Rāga Sāraṅga

(30)

जाके गति है हनुमानकी ।
ताकी पैज पूजि आई, यह रेखा कुलिस पषानकी ।।1।।
अघटित-घटन, सुघट-बिघटन, ऐसी बिरुदावलि नहिं आनकी ।
सुमिरत संकट-सोच-बिमोचन, मूरति मोद-निधानकी ।।2।।
तापर सानुकूल गिरिजा, हर, लखन, राम अरु जानकी ।
तुलसी कपिकी कृपा-बिलोकनि, खानि सकल कल्यानकी ।।3।।

(30)

jākē gati hai hanumānakī.

tākī paija pūji āī, yaha rēkhā kulisa paṣānakī. 1.

aghaṭita-ghaṭana, sughaṭa-bighaṭana, aisī birudāvali nahim ānakī.

sumirata saṅkaṭa-sōca-bimōcana, mūrati mōda-nidhānakī. 2.

tāpara sānukūla girijā, hara, laṣana, rāma aru jānakī.

tulasī kapikī kṛpā-bilōkani, khāni sakala kalyānakī. 3.

Verse no. 30—Those who solely depend on Hanuman can be reassured that all their vows, objectives, desires, aims and purpose would be fully achieved and completely fulfilled. This fact is eternal and unalterable like a line drawn by thunderbolt on stone (i.e. it can't be erased or tampered with). (1).

This is because Hanuman can make possible what is impossible, and vice-versa. No one else possesses such fame, superseding authority and power. All sorrows, agonies, miseries, troubles, tribulations, ordeals and concerns are completely erased or absolutely removed as soon as Hanuman is remembered (with devotion and faith). (2).

Oh Tulsidas! Those who are fortunate enough to have the beneficial and benevolent glance of Hanuman—who is a mine of all welfares and auspiciousness—falling upon them, such people will always have Shiva, Parvati, Laxman, Ram and Sita favourably inclined, most kind, extremely obliging and exceedingly benign towards them. (3).

Rāga Gaurī

(31)

ताकिहै तमकि ताकी ओर को ।

जाको है सब भाँति भरोसो कपि केसरी—किसोरको ।।1।।

जन—रंजन अरिगन—गंजन मुख—भंजन खल बरजोर को ।

बेद—पुरान—प्रगट पुरुषारथ सकल—सुभट—सिरमोर को ।।2।।

उथपे—थपन, थपे उथपन पन, बिबुधबुंद बैदिछोर को ।

जलधि लाँधि दहि लंक प्रबल बल दलन निषाचर घोर को ।।3।।

जाको बालबिनोद समुझि जिय डरत दिवाकर भोरको ।

जाकी चिबुक—चोट चूरन किय रद—मद कुलिस कठोरको ।।4।।

लोकपाल अनुकूल बिलोकिबो चहत बिलोचन—कोरको ।

सदा अभय, जय, मुद—मंगलमय जो सेवक रनरोरको ।।5।।

भगत—कामतरु नाम राम परिपूरन चंद चकोरको ।

तुलसी फल चारों करतल जस गावत गई बहोरको ।।6।।

(31)

tākihāi tamaki tākī ōra kō.

jākō hai saba bhāmṭi bharōsō kapi kēsārī-kisōrakō. 1.

jana-ranjana arigana-ganjana mukha-bhanjana khala barajōra kō.

bēda-purāna-pragaṭa puruṣāratha sakala-subhaṭa-siramōra kō. 2.

uthapē-thapana, thapē uthapana pana, bibudhabrnda bamḍichōra kō.

jaladhi lāmḍhi dahi laṅka prabala bala dalana nisācara ghōra kō. 3.

jākō bālabinōda samujhi jiya ḍarata divākara bhōrakō.
 jākī cibuka-cōṭa cūrana kiya rada-mada kulisa kaṭhōrakō. 4.
 lōkapāla anukūla bilōkibō cahata bilōcana-kōrakō.
 sadā abhaya, jaya, muda-maṅgalamaya jō sēvaka ranarōrakō. 5.
 bhagata-kāmataru nāma rāma paripūrana canda cakōrakō.
 tulasī phala cārōm karatala jasa gāvata ga'ibahōrakō. 6.

Verse no. 31—Who can look with indignation, anger, ill-will and malice towards him who relies solely on the son of Kesari (i.e. Hanuman)? (1).

Who can compare with him (Hanuman) when it comes to making the devotees feel happy and cheerful, as well as in the destruction (elimination or conquering) of enemies, or in hitting hard on the face of the wicked and evil-mongers, and in valour, courage and bravery? (Of course, no one.) His valour, manliness, strength, courage and bravery are famous in the Vedas and Purans. Indeed, who is more exalted, lauded and honoured in the community of great warriors other than Hanuman? (2).

Who else except Hanuman can reinstate those who are dethroned forcefully and unscrupulously from their right to the throne (e.g. Sugriv, Vibhishan), or dethrone those already at the helm of affairs and are firmly established on their respective thrones and kingdoms (but have become sinful, pervert and unrighteous—e.g. Ravana, Bali etc.). Who else can determinedly liberate the Gods from Ravana's bondage, leap across the ocean to burn Lanka, as well as vanquish and crush the strength and valour of innumerable fierce demon warriors. (3).

He, whose childhood pranks (in which he has playfully swallowed the sun thinking it to be a red fruit) still inspire fear and awe in the heart of the morning sun, and whose chin had put to shame the hardness of Indra's Vajra (because it could not crush Hanuman's chin in a stand off between the two). (4).

He, whose service is eagerly sought by the Digpals (a type of semi Gods), is such that those who serve him are always fearless, conquer their enemies, get all worldly pleasures, and also attain salvation. (5).

The name of Hanuman—who constantly fixes his gaze on the face of Lord Ram even as the Chakor bird (the Indian red-legged partridge which is said to be enamoured by the moon) constantly gazes at the full moon—is like a Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling celestial tree of Gods) for his devotees. Oh Tulsidas! Those who sing the glories of Hanuman who can restore lost objects are able to have all the four fruits (which are considered as the best rewards that are obtainable by a man—viz. Artha or prosperity and wealth, Dharma or the possession of auspicious virtues and righteousness, Kaam which refers to wish fulfillment, and Moksha which implies emancipation and salvation. (6).

Rāga Bilāvala

ऐसी तोहि न बूझिये हनुमान हठीले।
 साहेब कहूँ न रामसे, तोसे न उसीले॥1॥
 तेरे देखत सिंहके सिसु मेंढक लीले।
 जानत हौं कलि तेरेऊ मन गुनगन कीले॥2॥
 हाँक सुनत दसकंधके भये बंधन ढीले।
 सो बल गयो किधौं भये अब गरबगहीले॥3॥
 सेवकको परदा फटे तू समरथ सीले।
 अधिक आपुते आपुनो सुनि मान सही ले॥4॥
 साँसति तुलसीदासकी सुनि सुजस तुही ले।
 तिहूँकाल तिनको भलौ जे राम रँगिले॥5॥

(32)

aisī tōhi na būjhiyē hanumāna haṭhīlē.
 sāhēba kahūṁ na rāmasē, tōsē na usīlē. 1.
 tērē dēkhata sinhakē sisu mēṇḍhaka līlē.
 jānata hauṁ kali tērē'ū mana gunagana kīlē. 2.
 hāmka sunata dasakandhakē bhayē bandhana ḍhīlē.
 sō bala gayō kidhauṁ bhayē aba garabagahīlē. 3.
 sēvakakō paradā phaṭē tū samaratha sīlē.
 adhika āputē āpunō suni māna sahī lē. 4.
 sāmṣati tulasīdāsakī suni sujasa tuhī lē.
 tihūmkāla tinakō bhalau jē rāma raṁgīlē. 5.

Verse no. 32—Oh adamant and stubborn Hanuman! [‘Adamant and stubborn’ are not used in any negative sense, but they intend to convey the idea that Hanuman is uncompromising, unrelenting, always eager, diligent and active in protecting his devotees, looking after their welfare, and removing their miseries and torments.]

You should not act like this. [It appears that Tulsidas is politely admonishing Hanuman for showing laxity, slackness, apathy or carelessness in protecting him (i.e. Tulsidas) though Hanuman is renowned as a protector of Lord Ram’s devotees.]

There is no Lord compared to Lord Ram, and no assistant of a Lord compared to you. [Tulsidas’ intension is clear here: he affectionately, courteously, jovially but politely wishes to cajole Hanuman, coax and plead with him to extend his protection to Tulsidas against his tormentors because Tulsidas is a devotee of Lord Ram, and Hanuman is committed to protect such persons.] (1).

In spite of this glory and capability of yours it is surprising and a great irony that while you are watching silently this wretched Kaliyug, in the form of a frog, is gobbling up the cub of a lion. [Here, Tulsidas compares himself with a lion’s cub because Hanuman is like a lion, and Tulsidas, being a devotee or protectorate of Hanuman, is akin to a lion’s cub. Tulsidas means that Kaliyug, which has no significance or power when compared to Hanuman, and is therefore compared to a frog, has had the guts, the temerity and the audacity to tease the lion’s cub simply because the lion is indolent, slothful and careless about the welfare of its own cub!]

It appears that this Kaliyug has nailed (made ineffective or impotent) your famed virtues of showing love towards your devotees and your determination to

protect those who have taken your refuge, along with your magnanimity, generosity, merciful nature etc. (2).

There was a day when all the joints of the ten-shouldered Ravana's body were weakened that they creaked and buckled on hearing your thunderous roar—where has that determination, valour, courage and strength (for which you are renowned) gone? Or, is it that you have become haughty or spiteful (upon me) and have lost your inherent nature of being merciful, kind, compassionate, gracious and benevolent (upon your devotees)? (3).

Today, the curtain (of self respect, honour and dignity) of your devotee is being torn apart—you must sew it (i.e. you must restore it). You must save his dignity and modesty from being lost (or trampled underfoot). Why can't you do it for you are all-able, empowered and adept in doing it! Earlier you used to treat your devotees with more respect and care than you had even for yourself, heard them and pleas, and had shown tolerance and fortitude to them (took care of them, overlooked their mischief, their flaws, weaknesses, follies and shortcomings, and extended all possible help and protection to them)—but I am aghast at your apathy and wonder what has happened to you now? (4).

Hearing the distressed pleas of Tulsidas, why don't you remove his agonies and troubles, and take the credit for it? In actual fact (whether you like it or not), the devotees of Lord Ram are assured of their welfare and happiness in all the three eras (past, present, future). [So really, I am not much bothered whether you pay attention to my pleas or not. My well-being and welfare are assured because I am a devotee of Lord Ram. I just wanted to give you a chance to get easy publicity, fame or credit for ensuring my welfare which nevertheless is certain by virtue of Ram's nature of showing compassion, forgiveness, grace, mercy and benevolence upon his devotees regardless of whether other Gods do the same or not.] (5).

(33)

समरथ सुअन समीरके, रघुबीर—पियारे।
 मोपर कीबी तोहि जो करि लेहि भिया रे।।1।।
 तेरी महिमा ते चलैं चिंचिनी—चिया रे।
 अँधियारो मेरी बार क्यों, त्रिभुवन—उजियारे।।2।।
 केहि करनी जन जानिकै सनमान किया रे।
 केहि अघ औगुन आपने कर डारि दिया रे।।3।।
 खाई खोंची मोंगि मैं तेरो नाम लिया रे।
 तेरे बल, बलि, आजु लौं जग जागि जिया रे।।4।।
 जो तोसों होतौ फिरौं मेरो हेतु हिया रे।
 तौ क्यों बदन देखावतो कहि बचन इयारे।।5।।
 तोसो ग्यान—निधान को सरबग्य बिया रे।
 हौं समुझत साई—द्रोहकी गति छार छिया रे।।6।।
 तेरे स्वामी राम से, स्वामिनी सिया रे।
 तहँ तुलसीके कौनको काको तकिया रे।।7।।

(33)

samaratha su'ana samīrakē, raghubīra-piyārē.
 mōpara kībī tōhi jō kari lēhi bhiyā rē. 1.
 tērī mahimā tē calaim cinīcinī-ciya rē.
 amḍhiyārō mērī bāra kyōm, tribhuvana-ujjiyārē. 2.
 kēhi karanī jana jānikai sanamāna kiyā rē.
 kēhi agha auguna āpanē kara ḍāri diyā rē. 3.
 khāī khōncī māmgi maiḥ tērō nāma liyā rē.
 tērē bala, bali, āju laurḥ jaga jāgi jiyā rē. 4.
 jō tōsōm hōtau phiraurḥ mērō hētu hiyā rē.
 tau kyōm badana dēkhāvatō kahi bacana iyārē. 5.
 tōsō gyāna-nidhāna kō sarabagya biyā rē.
 haurḥ samujhata sāīrḥ-drōhakī gati chāra chiyā rē. 6.
 tērē svāmī rāma sē, svāminī siyā rē.
 tahamḥ tulasīkē kaunakō kākō takiyā rē. 7.

Verse no. 33—Oh almighty son of the Wind-God (Hanuman)! Oh the beloved of Lord Ram! Oh brother, do whatever you like to do with me now. (1).

By your grace, even the seeds of the Tamarind tree can serve the purpose of metal coins and ‘Asharfis’ (gold coins). [That is to say that if you wish then even a useless fellow like me can be counted amongst the devotees, and thus acquire some worth.] Oh the one who lights (illuminates) all the three worlds! Why are you, then, making this world dark, gloomy, fearful and foreboding for me? (2).

Say, what was my good deed that had made you first accept me as your servant and a devoted follower and show respect me, and now what sin or crime have I committed that you have thrown me off your hands (i.e. have discarded or abandoned me)? (3).

I had always begged for food in your name, and I swear by you (i.e. I solely and truthfully rely upon you). I have lived in this world relying only on your strength and support. (4).

If I had been opposed to you due to any ill-feelings in my heart, would I have had the courage and face to say what I feel (without any fear or hesitation) as if I was a member of your own family (of devotees)? (5).

You know what is in my mind because there is no one like you in having deep insight, wisdom, and the mystical ability of being able to know the thoughts of others. I do understand that those who oppose their Lord (master) are bound to be ruined. (6).

Lord Ram is your Lord, and Sita is his divine consort. For Tulsidas there is no one besides you for support and help. Therefore, why don't you take me there (to Lord Ram and Sita)? [That is, since I solely rely upon you for the fulfillment of my wishes,

I expect you to grant this wish to me that I have the good fortune to come close to Lord Ram and Sita.] (7).

(34)

अति आरत, अति स्वारथी, अति दीन—दुखारी ।
 इनको बिलगु न मानिये, बोलहिं न बिचारी ॥1॥
 लोक—रीति देखी सुनी, ब्याकुल नर—नारी ।
 अति बरषे अनबरषेहुँ, देहिं दैवहिं गारी ॥2॥
 नाकहि आये नाथसों साँसति भय भारी ।
 कहि आयो, कीबी छमा, निज ओर निहारी ॥3॥
 समै साँकरे सुमिरिये, समरथ हितकारी ।
 सो सब बिधि ऊबर करै, अपराध बिसारी ॥4॥
 बिगरी सेवककी सदा, साहेबहिं सुधारी ।
 तुलसीपर तेरी कृपा, निरुपाधि निरारी ॥5॥

(34)

ati ārata, ati svārathī, ati dīna-dukhārī.
 inakō bilagu na māniyē, bōlahim na bicārī. 1.
 lōka-rīti dēkhī sunī, byākula nara-nārī.
 ati baraṣē anabaraṣēhūṁ, dēhim daivahim gārī. 2.
 nākahi āyē nāthasōm sām̐sati bhaya bhārī.
 kahi āyō, kībī chamā, nija ōra nihārī. 3.
 samai sām̐karē sumiriyē, samaratha hitakārī.
 sō saba bidhi ūbara karai, aparādha bisārī. 4.
 bigarī sēvakakī sadā, sāhēbahim sudhārī.
 tulasīpara tērī kṛpā, nirupādhi nirārī. 5.

Verse no. 34—Oh Hanuman! One should not mind the words of those who are distressed and in great agony, those who are very selfish, those who are most wretched and unhappy—because being emotionally and mentally upset they do not know what to say (and how to think and behave). [And therefore, they deserve forgiveness. Here Tulsidas requests Hanuman to forgive him for his demeanours and any wrong-doings that he may have done inadvertently and unwillingly. Refer stanza no. 3 below.] (1).

It is usually seen clearly in the world that people accuse Gods in case of excess or deficient rainfall (i.e. for misfortunes), but the Gods don't bother about it. (2).

Similarly, when I was aghast and fed-up with the agonies and torments caused by Kaliyug, and the fear created by this deluding world which is like a fathomless ocean, I lost my bearings and uttered angry, irresponsible and irreverent words. Now, invoking your love for you devotees, I request you to excuse me and forgive me, and ignore my childish indiscretions and rashness. (3).

When one is confronted with troubles and feels miserable, one turns towards him whom one considers as a fast and reliable friend upon whose shoulders one can weep and relieve his agonies, with whom one can share one's troubles and pains, and it is also expected that one gets full support and protection from such a friend. (4).

It has been a noble tradition that the errors and faults of a humble servant or subordinate have always been corrected, overlooked and forgiven by his master. In my case it is fortunate that you have paid special attention to me, and have shown special grace and kindness upon me. (5).

(35)

कटु कहिये गाढ़े परे, सुनि समुझि सुसाई ।
 करहिं अनभलेउ को भलो, आपनी भलाई ।।1।।
 समरथ सुभ जो पाइये, बीर पीर पराई ।
 ताहि तर्कैं सब ज्यों नदी बारिधि न बुलाई ।।2।।
 अपने अपनेको भलो, चहैं लोग लुगाई ।
 भावै जो जेहि तेहि भजै, सुभ असुभ सगाई ।।3।।
 बाँह बोलि दै थापिये, जो निज बरिआई ।
 बिन सेवा सों पालिये, सेवककी नाई ।।4।।
 चूक—चपलता मेरियै, तू बड़ो बड़ाई ।
 हो आदरे ढीठ है, अति नीच निचाई ।।5।।
 बंदिछोर बिरुदावली, निगमागम गाई ।
 नीको तुलसीदासको, तेरियै निकाई ।।6।।

(35)

kaṭu kahiye gāṛhē parē, suni samujhi susā'ī.
 karahim anabhalē'u kō bhalō, āpanī bhalā'ī. 1.
 samaratha subha jō pā'iyē, bīra pīra parā'ī.
 tāhi takaim saba jyōm nadī bāridhi na bulā'ī. 2.
 apanē apanēkō bhalō, cahaim lōga lugā'ī.
 bhāvai jō jēhi tēhi bhajai, subha asubha sagā'ī. 3.
 bāmha bōli dai thāpiyē, jō nija bari'ā'ī.
 bina sēvā sōm pāliyē, sēvakakī nā'īm. 4.
 cūka-capalatā mēriyai, tū barō barā'ī.
 hō ādarē ḍhīṭha hai, ati nīca nicā'ī. 5.
 bandichōra birudāvalī, nigamāgama gā'ī.
 nīkō tulasīdāsakō, tēriyai nikā'ī. 6.

Verse no. 35—When a servant or subordinate is under distress and troubled by problems, he is inclined to vent his feeling of grief and his sense of misery and agony by accusing his Lord for all his troubles (and the latter's failure to either prevent such happenings or to grant immunity from them, or to extend complete relief from them once they materialize). [The servant forgets that the one is obliged to accept the

effects of deeds done by him, and the Lord has got nothing to do with his sufferings.]

A good Lord is one who realises the servant's mental agonies, stress and predicament, and instead of being angry, annoyed and vindictive with the latter he does good to his servant by taking proper care of his welfare and ensuring that his sufferings end as quickly as possible and without leaving any scars on his psyche. (1).

When one's Lord is able, strong, powerful, magnanimous and benevolent to such an extent that he is always ready to help anyone in their times of need, such a gracious Lord is always sought after by people in their times of grief, distress and need like the instance of the rivers that rush towards the ocean without waiting for an invitation. [People rush un-invited towards magnanimous and compassionate Lords seeking all types of favours because, first, they are sure that they won't be rebuked, scorned at, insulted and turned away, and second, that their needs and desires would be taken care of, and that their approaching the Lord would not go in vain.] (2).

In this world every man and woman wants their own welfare and happiness, and therefore they worship that God who can help them achieve it. But for me, you (Hanuman) are the only hope, solace and succour. (3).

When you have prevailed upon someone to become your servant (a follower, a devotee or subordinate) with the assurance of giving support and protection of your arms to him, then inspite of the latter's not serving you diligently or faithfully and being a worthless burden upon you, you should still sustain him as if he were a loyal servant (because you are morally bound to do so as you have given your word of honour to him). [Being the Lord it is your moral obligation and traditional responsibility to ensure that your subjects are well tended for inspite of the fact that the latter are not worthy for such magnanimity because they might be unfaithful and lack enthusiasm in serving their Lord. This is the reason why you are so respected as you indeed do so; you do take care of your devotees and followers.] (4).

I am at fault, fickle and unsteady (in my faith and loyalty towards you), but you are senior to me, you are my Lord—therefore it is befitting to expect from you that would gladly forgive culprits (guilty, sinful, pervert, wicked, unfaithful, unscrupulous, wavering and mischievous people) like me. It is well-known that when a crooked, mean and evil person is respected, he becomes haughty and arrogant, and begins to behave meanly. [That is why you should not pay attention to my lowly and mean behaviour, and my foolish misdemeanors.] (5).

The Vedas and scriptures sing your fame as the one who liberates and provides deliverance from the shackles (of this mundane existence). This Tulsidas' welfare and happiness is now in your hands, for otherwise I am of no worth. [That is, without your kindness, grace, benevolence and mercy, I have no hope of succour and salvation from anyone or from any other source.] (6).

[Note—Though nowhere mentioned here, this verse also refers to Hanuman.]

Rāga Gaurī

(36)

मंगल—मूरति मारुत—नंदन । सकल—अमंगल—मूल—निकंदन ।।1।।
 पवनतनय संतन—हितकारी । हृदय बिराजत अवध—बिहारी ।।2।।
 मातु—पिता, गुरु, गनपति, सारद । सिवा—समेत संभु, सुक, नारद ।।3।।
 चरन बंदि बिनवौं सब काहू । देहु रामपद—नेह—निबाहू ।।4।।
 बंदौ राम—लखन—बैदेही । जे तुलसीके परम सनेही ।।5।।

(36)

maṅgala-mūraṭi māruta-nandana. sakala-amaṅgala-mūla-nikandana. 1.
 pavanatanaya santana-hitakārī. hr̥daya birājata avadha-bihārī. 2.
 mātu-pitā, guru, ganapati, sārada. sivā-samēta sambhu, suka, nārada. 3.
 carana bandi binavaum̐ saba kāhū. dēhu rāmapada-nēha-nibāhū. 4.
 bandau rāma-lakhana-baidēhī. jē tulasīkē parama sanēhī. 5.

Verse no. 36—Hanuman, the son of the Wind-God, is an embodiment of all auspiciousness and well beings. He can uproot and dispel all the faults and sins from their very root or foundation (so that they do not rear their heads again). (1).

He is the son of the Wind-God, is the one who is a great benefactor of saints, and Lord Ram always dwells in his heart. (2).

I bow my head at his feet, as well as to my parents, Guru (wise teacher), Lord Ganesh (patron God of auspiciousness), goddess Saraswati (patron goddess of learning), Lord Shiva (Rudra, whose incarnation is Hanuman) along with his consort Parvati, sage Shukdeo (the legendary parrot who recited the Bhagwat Maha Puran) and sage Narad (the celestial saint and the mental son of the creator Brahma)—I pray to all of them and ask for granting me the boon that my devotion and love for the holy feet of Lord Ram shall ever remain steady and undiminished. (3-4).

Finally, I also pay my deepest respects to Lord Ram, Laxman and Sita, the Trinity, who are the dearest and the sole Lord of Tulsidas. (5).

Prayer offered to Laxman

(The younger step-brother of Lord Ram & his constant companion)

Rāga Daṇḍaka

(37)

लाल लाड़िले लखन, हित हौ जनके ।
 सुमिरे संकटहारी, सकल सुमंगलकारी,
 पालक कृपालु अपने पनके ॥1॥
 धरनी—धरनहार भंजन—भुवनभार,
 अवतार साहसी सहसफनके ॥
 सत्यसंघ, सत्यव्रत, परम धरमरत,
 निरमल करम बचन अरु मनके ॥2॥
 रूपके निधान, धनु—बान पानि,
 तून कटि, महाबीर बिदित, जितैया बड़े रनके ॥
 सेवक—सुख—दायक, सबल, सब लायक,
 गायक जानकीनाथ गुनगनके ॥3॥
 भावते भरतके, सुमित्रा—सीताके दुलारे,
 चातक चतुर राम स्याम घनके ॥
 बल्लभ उरमिलाके सुलभ सनेहबस,
 धनी धन तुलसीसे निरधनके ॥4॥

(37)

lāla lāḍilē lakhana, hita hau janakē.
 sumirē saṅkaṭahārī, sakala sumaṅgalakārī,
 pālaka kṛpālu apanē panakē. 1.
 dharanī-dharanahāra bhañjana-bhuvanabhāra,
 avatāra sāhasī sahasaphanakē.
 satyasaṅgha, satyabrata, parama dharamarata,
 niramala karama bacana aru manakē. 2.
 rūpakē nidhāna, dhanu-bāna pāni,
 tūna kaṭi, mahābīra bidita, jitaīyā baṛē ranakē.
 sēvaka-sukha-dāyaka, sabala, saba lāyaka,
 gāyaka jānakīnātha gunaganakē. 3.
 bhāvatē bharatakē, sumitrā-sītākē dulārē,
 cātaka catura rāma syāma ghanakē.
 ballabha uramilākē sulabha sanēhabasa,
 dhanī dhana tulasīsē niradhanakē. 4.

Verse no. 37—Oh dear and most affectionate Laxman*! You are the benefactor of your devotees. You eliminate troubles and tribulations immediately on being remembered. You are the provider of all auspiciousness and welfare, are true to your words, and are very gracious, merciful and kind on those who are miserable, wretched and distressed. (1).

You bear the earth#, you eliminate the burden of the world, you are extremely courageous, valiant and brave, and you are an incarnation of Sesh Nath (the Lord of serpents). You are true to your promises and vows, are a great follower of Dharma (the principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility, scrupulousness, propriety and probity), and are the one who has an immaculate and uncorrupt mind, a truthful speech (words), and do auspicious and noble deeds. [#Laxman bears the earth because

primarily he is Lord Shesh Nath, the hooded serpent who is said to hold the earth on its hood.] (2).

You are a treasury of attractiveness and charms (i.e. are handsome and have virtuous qualities in you). You hold a bow and an arrow in your hands, while a quiver is tied around your waist. You are a world famous warrior who is great and courageous; you are steadfast, brave and victorious in big wars. You give succour, solace, happiness and joy to your faithful servants (devotees, followers). You are most valiant, brave, powerful and strong as well as competent and able in all respects. And you sing the litany of glories of the Lord of Janki (i.e. of Lord Ram). (3).

You are a beloved of Bharat (Laxman's brother), dearest of Sumitra (his mother) and Sita (Lord Ram's divine consort). You are like a clever Chatak (a cuckoo) when it comes to the enchanting form of Lord Ram which is like the dark rain-bearing clouds. [That is, you constantly and eagerly fix your attention on Lord Ram, and are always ready to serve him in all possible ways. The Chatak fixes its gaze upon the Moon and is totally enamoured by it.]

You are the husband of Urmila. You are accessible easily by love and affection (i.e. by devotion), and for a penniless pauper such as Tulsidas, you are a rich and charitable person who generously gives (donates) wealth in the form of Lord Ram's devotion. [That is, anyone who seeks Ram's devotion and approaches you, such a seeker is sure to get his wishes fulfilled. So I expect this largesse to be showered upon me as well.] (4).

[Note--*Laxman was the step-brother of Lord Ram, and was the comrade-in-arm and a constant companion of the Lord throughout his life. He was the son of Sumitra, the step-mother of Lord Ram. His wife was Urmila. (Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 325.)

Laxman had renounced the kingdom of Ayodhya when Lord Ram went to forest for 14 years, and had helped the Lord emotionally to overcome some of the greatest bad times there, such as the time when Sita, Ram's wife, was stolen by the demon king Ravana and the Lord was absolutely devastated and distraught. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 30.

During the war of Lanka, Laxman had fought alongside the Lord and was even mortally wounded in the battle-field. At that time Lord Ram had wailed and grieved immensely for Laxman, though of course the latter was revived later on. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 61 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 1-18.

It is believed that he was an incarnation of Lord Seshnath, the legendary serpent on whose coiled body Lord Vishnu reclines as Seshnath floats on the surface of Kshir Sagar, the celestial ocean of milk. According to Puranic lore, Seshnath supports the earth on its thousand hoods. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 197.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 17 these above facts have been explicitly stated by Tulsidas.]

Rāga Dhanāśrī

(38)

जयति

लक्ष्मणानंत भगवंत भूधर, भुजग—
 राज, भुवनेश, भूभारहारी ।
 प्रलय—पावक—महाज्वालमाला—वमन,
 शमन—संताप लीलावतारी ।।1।।
 जयति दाशरथि, समर—समरथ, सुमित्रा—
 सुवन, शत्रुसूदन, राम—भरत बंधो ।
 चारु—चंपक—वरन, वसन—भूषण—धरन,
 दिव्यतर, भव्य, लावण्य—सिंधो ।।2।।
 जयति गाधेय—गौतम—जनक—सुख—जनक,
 विश्व—कंटक—कुटिल—कोटि—हंता ।
 वचन—चय—चातुरी—परशुधर—गरबहर,
 सर्वदा रामभद्रानुगंता ।।3।।
 जयति सीतेश—सेवासरस, बिषयरस—
 निरस, निरुपाधि धुरधर्मधारी ।
 विपुलबलमूल शार्दूलविक्रम जलद—
 नाद—मर्दन, महावीर भारी ।।4।।
 जयति संग्राम—सागर—भयंकर—तरन,
 रामहित—करण वरबाहु—सेतू ।
 उर्मिला—रवन, कल्याण—मंगल—भवन,
 दासतुलसी—दोष—दवन—हेतू ।।5।।

(38)

jayati
 lakṣmaṇānanta bhagavanta bhūdhara, bhujaga-
 rāja, bhuvanēśa, bhūbhārahārī.
 pralaya-pāvaka-mahājvālamālā-vamana,
 śamana-santāpa līlāvatārī. 1.
 jayati dāśarathi, samara-samaratha, sumitrā-
 suvana, śatrusūdana, rāma-bharata bandhō.
 cāru-campaka-varana, vasana-bhūṣana-dharana,
 divyatara, bhavya, lāvaṇya-sindhō. 2.
 jayati gādhēya-gautama-janaka-sukha-janaka,
 viśva-kaṇṭaka-kuṭīla-kōṭi-hantā.
 vacana-caya-cāturī-paraśudhara-garabahara,
 sarvadā rāmabhadrānugantā. 3.
 jayati sītēśa-sēvāsarasa, biṣayarasa-
 nirasa, nirupādhi dhuradharmaadhārī.
 vipulabalamūla śārdūlavikrama jalada-
 nāda-mardana, mahāvīra bhārī. 4.
 jayati saṅgrāma-sāgara-bhayaṅkara-tarana,
 rāmahita-karaṇa varabāhu-sētū.
 urmilā-ravana, kalyāṇa-maṅgala-bhavana,
 dāsatulāsī-dōṣa-davana-hētū . 5.

Verse no. 38—Glory to Laxman! You are the Lord (“bhagavanta”) who is without an end, are an incarnation of Lord Sesh Nath, the legendary king of serpents who bears the earth (on its hood) {“bhūdhara, bhujagarrāja”}, are the Lord of the whole world, are the remover of the burden of the earth, can spew fierce and scorching flames like those of the dooms-day fire when angry, are the destroyer of the torments and miseries of the world, and had taken a human form out of your own free will. (1).

Glory to Laxman, the son of Dashrath (the king of Ayodhya)! You are all-powerful and invincible during a combat, are the son of mother Sumitra, are the destroyer of enemies, and are a dear brother of Bharat and Lord Ram. The complexion of your handsome body is like the flowers of Magnolia. You are attired in very charming, attractive and magnificent clothes and ornaments. And you are a like a symbolic huge ocean of glamour, beauty and charm. (2).

You had given pleasure to sages Vishwamitra and Gautam as well as to king Janak. [That is, you had provided immense satisfaction and contentment to them by removing the cause of their sorrows.] You are the slayer of cruel demons who were like millions of prickly thorns for this world. You had vanquished the haughtiness of Parashuram by mere use of clever and intelligent words (instead of any duel or fighting for which Parashuram was very eager). And you always walked behind Lord Ram (i.e. obeyed the Lord, diligently served him, took good care of him, and followed the path shown by him). Glory to such a Laxman! (3).

You are devout and diligent in serving ‘Sitesh’ (the Lord of Sita, i.e. Lord Ram). You are completely detached from and uninterested in the pleasures of the sense organs or the objects of the material world. You bear the axle of Dharma (duty) in the form of devout service for Lord Ram, a service that is honest and sincere, and without any cunning, deceit or crookedness. [That is, you have taken upon yourself the exclusive responsibility of diligently serving Lord Ram.] You are an eternal home of measureless strength, are brave as a lion, are a slayer of Meghnad (the mighty son of Ravana, the ten-headed king of Lanka and the demon race), and are indeed most valiant, courageous and brave. Glory to such a Laxman! (4).

You can easily and without much of an effort cross a huge ocean symbolizing any kind of warfare. You had metaphorically converted your arms into a bridge to help Lord Ram accomplish his desired work (which was to free the earth from the burden of cruel demons). You are the husband of Urmila, a fount of auspiciousness, happiness and welfare, and the main factor (chiefly responsible) in destruction of all the sins of Tulsidas. Glory to such a Laxman! (5).

Prayer offered to Bharata

(He was a step-brother of Lord Ram)

जयति
 भूमिजा—रमण—पदपंकज—मकरंद—रस—
 रसिक—मधुकर भरत भूरिभागी ।
 भुवन भूषण—भानुवंश—भूषण, भूमिपाल—
 मणि रामचंद्रानुरागी ।।1।।
 जयति विबुधेश—धनदादि दुर्लभ महा
 राज—संम्राज—सुख—पद—विरागी ।
 खड्ग—धाराव्रती—प्रथमरेखा प्रकट,
 शुद्धमति—युवति पति—प्रेमपागी ।।2।।
 जयति निरुपाधि—भक्तिभाव—यंत्रित—हृदय,
 बंधु—हित चित्रकूटाद्रि—चारी ।
 पादुका—नृप—सचिव, पुहुमि—पालक परम
 धरम—धुर—धीर, वरवीर भारी ।।3।।
 जयति संजीवनी—समय—संकट हनुमान
 धनुबान—महिमा बखानी ।
 बाहुबल बिपुल परमिति पराक्रम अतुल,
 गूढ़ गति जानकी—जानि जानी ।।4।।
 जयति रण—अजिर गन्धर्व—गण—गर्वहर,
 फिर किये रामगुणगाथा—गाता ।
 माण्डवी—चित्त—चातक—नवांबुद—बरन,
 सरन तुलसीदास अभय—दाता ।।5।।

(39)

jayati
 bhūmijā-ramaṇa-padapaṅkaja-makaranda-rasa-
 rasika-madhukara bharata bhūribhāgī.
 bhuvana bhūṣaṇa-bhānuvanśa-bhūṣaṇa, bhūmipāla-
 maṇi rāmacandrānurāgī. 1.
 jayati vibudhēśa-dhanadādi durlabha mahā
 rāja-sammrāja-sukha-pada-virāgī.
 khaḍga-dhārāvrati-prathamārēkhā prakāṣa,
 śud'dhamati-yuvati pati-prēmapāgī. 2.
 jayati nirupādhi-bhaktibhāva-yantrita-hṛdaya,
 bandhu-hita citrakūṭādrī-cārī.
 pādukā-nṛpa-saciva, puhumi-pālaka parama
 dharama-dhura-dhīra, varavīra bhārī. 3.
 jayati saṅjīvanī-samaya-saṅkaṣa hanūmāna
 dhanubāna-mahimā bakhānī.
 bāhubala bipula paramiti parākrama atula,
 gūṛha gati jānakī-jāni jānī. 4.
 jayati raṇa-ajira gandharva-gaṇa-garvahara,
 phira kiyē rāmaguṇagāthā-gātā.
 māṇḍavī-citta-cātaka-navāmbuda-barana,
 sarana tulasīdāsa abhaya-dātā. 5.

Verse no. 39—Glory to the most fortunate and lucky Bharat*! You are like a nectar-seeking bee for the purpose of drinking the nectar that contained in the lotus-like holy feet of the Lord of the daughter of mother Earth (i.e. Lord Ram, the divine husband of Sita). You are like an ornament of the world, the jewel of the Sun-race, and the most beloved of Lord Ram who is the best among the kings. (1).

Glory to Bharat! You had turned away from (i.e. had spurned the offer and the privilege of) enjoying the grandeur, pomp, majesty, pleasures and comforts of a great kingdom and empire (i.e. the realm of Ayodhya) which is very rare even for Indra, Kuber and Lokpals to acquire and enjoy (i.e. it is difficult for them to imagine such great wealth and resist the temptation for enjoying it). You are regarded as the best in the community of those whose commitment to devoted to service (of their respective Lords) is as sharp as the edge of a sword (i.e. very difficult to emulate or follow). And your thoughts and mind are entirely focused on having affection and devotion (for Lord Ram) like a young wife would have towards her beloved husband. (2).

Glory to Bharat! Motivated by pure love, affection and devotion, you had gone barefoot to Chitrakoot to bring Lord Ram back to Ayodhya. [And after bringing Lord Ram's wooden sandals as a token of his personal presence—] You had treated these sandals as the de-facto king of the realm, and yourself as a mere minister who is acting on the behalf of the monarch and taking care of the realm to the best of his abilities. You have borne the axle of Lord Ram's devotion as your only Dharma (duty). [That is, all your laws, rules, conduct, authority, sanctions and codes are basically centered around Lord Ram's devotion; anything devoid of devotion is unlawful for you. Having steady and robust virtue of devotion for Lord Ram is the only auspicious thing for a creature to do which can provide him with all the fruits of righteous and noble conducts that he can expect to achieve.] (3).

Glory to Bharat! When Laxman was injured (in Lanka), Hanuman had gone to fetch the Sanjivani herb (from the Himalayan mountain ranges in the north). [As he was flying back to Lanka with the mighty mountain in his hands, Bharat had shot him down with an arrow without a tip. Later on, Bharat had asked the injured Hanuman to ride piggy-back on his arrow so that he can reach Lanka within the allotted time because his arrow will fly faster and would also help to take some rest as he won't have to make any further exertion in flying with the weight of the mountain in hand.]

At that time, Hanuman had praised you (Bharat) and the strength of your arms, as well as that of your bow and arrow (because it was not easy for anyone to shoot down a swiftly flying and mighty Hanuman by a single shot, which you had done)¹. Your arms have uncomparable strength and power, your fame and valour are stupendous, and it is only Lord Ram who knows the glorious virtues you possess². (4).

You had destroyed (or vanquished) the pride, vanity and ego of celestial singers and dancers (known as Gandharvas) in the battle-field, and then made them sing the fame and glories of Lord Ram once again—glory to such a Bharat! For a Chatak (cuckoo) in the form of Mandavi's (Bharat's wife) mind and thoughts, you are like a dark rain-

bearing cloud (i.e. she keeps her thoughts fixed on you like a Chatak does on the cloud).

Tulsidas says that he has surrendered himself to (i.e. taken refuge, shelter with) such a Bharat. (5).

[Note—*Bharat was also a step-brother of Lord Ram. His mother was Kaikeyi. In the story of the Ramayana, Kaikeyi had wanted that her son Bharat ascend the throne of the kingdom of Ayodhya, and for this reason had plotted for Lord Ram going to forest exile. But when Bharat came to know about the mischief that his mother has created, he very sternly rebuked her, publicly humiliating her and refusing to accept the crown which he said rightly belonged to Lord Ram. Thereafter, Bharat had gone all the way to Chitrakoot in the forest to bring Lord Ram back. But when the Lord explained things to him that it was essential that he remain in the forest because he had to accomplish the elimination of the demons as it was the primary reason why he had come down to earth from heaven (because Lord Ram was actually an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of the world), Bharat returned to Ayodhya, installed the Lord's footwear on the throne in a token manner of Lord Ram's coronation, and himself lived a life of a hermit on the outskirts of Ayodhya. Every single person, including the great sages and seers had lavishly praised Bharat and his exemplary level of devotion and love for the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 323—to Doha no. 326.

In the annals of spiritual and devotional literature, Bharat is remembered as a personified form of 'Bhakti' or love, devotion and submission for Lord God. His glories and pious nature have been extolled by the renowned sage Bharadwaj as well as the holy rivers Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati, and the gods themselves. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 207—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 210 (Bharadwaj's praise); and (ii) Doha no. 205 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8.

The glories of Bharat have been sung by Tulsidas in 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 17 where Tulsidas says that he offers his respect first to Bharat and bows before his feet before anyone else, for Bharat's sense of duty, his diligence in following the right path, and his strict adherence to obeying the principles of righteousness and probity in conduct and thought, are unmatched.

Bharat was responsible for taking care of the world and look after its needs. He took care of sustenance and well-being of the world—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 197.

¹Praise of Bharat at the time of bringing of Sanjivni herb by Hanuman: When Hanuman was returning from the Himalayas with the Sanjivani herb, Bharat shot him down thinking him to be some huge demon. At that time, Hanuman had praised the strength of arms, archery skills and the potential powers of arrows shot by Bharat because it was not easy for anyone to shoot down a swiftly flying Hanuman in the darkness of the night sky. And then when Bharat learnt the fact and realized that the time was short, he had asked Hanuman to ride on his arrow which he will shoot in the direction of Lanka so that Hanuman can reach there on time without having to make the effort of flying any more. Hanuman had wondered how the arrow would be able to fly with his weight on it. But when it actually did, he was all praise for Bharat. This stanza refers to this episode. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 60 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 5-8.

²Lord Ram's praise of Bharat: Refer Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 231—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha 232. This

latter verse clearly says that the glories of Bharat are so immense and mysterious that only Lord Ram can understand them.]

Prayer offered to Śatrughna

(He was the twin brother of Laxman & a step-brother of Lord Ram)

Rāga Dhanāśrī

(40)

जयति जय शत्रु-करि-केसरी शत्रुहन,
 शत्रुतम-तुहिनहर किरणकेतू ।
 देव-महिदेव-महि-धेनु-सेवक सुजन-
 सिद्ध-मुनि-सकल-कल्याण-हेतू ।। 1 ।।
 जयति सर्वांगसुन्दर समित्रा-सुवन,
 भुवन-विख्यात-भरतानुगामी ।
 वर्मचर्मासि-धनु-बाण-तूणीर-धर
 शत्रु-संकट-समय यत्प्रणामी ।। 2 ।।
 जयति लवणाम्बुनिधि-कुंभसंभव महा-
 दनुज-दुर्जनदवन, दुरितहारी ।
 लक्ष्मणानुज, भरत-राम-सीता-चरण-
 रेणु-भूषित-भाल-तिलकधारी ।। 3 ।।
 जयति श्रुतिकीर्ति-वल्लभ सुदुर्लभ सुलभ
 नमत नर्मद भुक्तिमुक्तिदाता ।
 दासतुलसी चरण-शरण सीदत विभो,
 पाहि दीनार्त्त-संताप-हाता ।। 4 ।।

(40)

jayati jaya śatru-kari-kēsarī śatruhana,
 śatrutama-tuhinahara kiraṇakētū.
 dēva-mahidēva-mahi-dhēnu-sēvaka sujana-
 sid'dha-muni-sakala-kalyāṇa-hētū. 1.
 jayati sarvāṅgasundara samitrā-suvana,
 bhuvana-vikhyāta-bharatānugāmī .
 varmacarmāsi-dhanu-bāṇa-tūṇīra-dhara
 śatru-saṅkaṭa-samaya yatpraṇāmī. 2.
 jayati lavaṇāmbunidhi-kumbhasambhava mahā-
 danuja-durjanadavana, duritahārī .
 lakṣmaṇānuja, bharata-rāma-sītā-caraṇa-
 rēṇu-bhūṣita-bhāla-tilakadhārī . 3.
 jayati śrutikīrti-vallabha sudurlabha sulabha
 namata narmada bhuktimuktidātā .
 dāsatulasī caraṇa-śaraṇa sīdata vibhō,

pāhi dīnātrta-santāpa-hātā . 4.

Verse no. 40—Glory to Shatrughan*, who is like a lion for the destruction of elephants symbolizing one's enemies. He is also like a sun to eliminate (or drive away) the enemy in the form of darkness and fog. He serves (and looks after the welfare of) Gods, Brahmins, the earth and holy cows (representing all meek and humble creatures). At the same time, he takes care of and provides for the welfare of gentlemen, mystics, hermits, sages etc. (1).

Glory to Shatrughan! Your whole body is glamorous (handsome). You are the son of mother Sumitra, and an obedient follower of the world-famous Bharat (your elder brother). You bear armour, a shield, a sword, a bow, an arrow and a quiver. You vanquish the enemy and dispel the torments inflicted by them. I bow before you! (2).

Glory to Shatrughan! For the purpose of overcoming and killing of the demon Lavanasur¹ who was like a formidable and fathomless ocean, you are like sage Agastya (who had drunk the ocean in one gulp). You are the destroyer (i.e. eliminator and vanquisher) of great miscreants and scoundrels who are highly sinful, as well as all things that are sinful, pervert, inauspicious and unrighteous. Glory to such a Shatrughan! You are a younger (twin) brother of Laxman, and you put the dust of the feet of Lord Ram, Sita and Bharat on your forehead as a Tilak-mark (a religious mark used by Hindus) to show your reverence to them. (3).

You are the husband of Srutikirti². While you are inaccessible to miscreants and rascals, you are easily accessible to humble servants (devotees and followers). You provide happiness, pleasure, comfort and liberation (from the worldly delusions and bondage) to those who bow before you reverentially. Glory to such a Shatrughan! Oh Lord! It is an irony that inspite of taking refuge and shelter with you this poor Tulsidas is being subjected to immense amount of agonies, miseries, torments and sufferings. Oh the one who removes the sorrows and miseries of the unfortunate ones who are miserable, distressed and the wretched! Kindly save him (Tulsidas)! (4).

[Note—*Shatrughan was the twin brother of Laxman. His wife was Srutkriti. During the 14 years of Lord Ram's forest sojourn, it was Shatrughan who had looked after the daily administrative affairs of the kingdom of Ayodhya.

He is regarded as the one who offers protection against one's enemies—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 17; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 197.

¹Lavanasur(lavaṇāmbunidhi-kumbhasambhava-mahā-danuja-durjanadavana): Lavanasur was a tyrannical demon ruler of Mathura. The subjects were immensely tormented by him. Hearing their plea for relief, Shatrughan asked Sri Ram's permission to go and defeat him. Lavanasur was eventually killed and the citizens of Mathura freed by Shatrughan from his tyranny.

This story is narrated in detail in Veda Vyas' epic 'Adhyatma Ramayan', Uttar Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-26.

²Srutikirti—She was the cousin sister of Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, and the younger sister of Mandavi, the wife of Bharat. She was married to Shatrughan. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line no. 11-12 that precede Doha no. 325.]

Prayer offered to Mother Sītā

(She was the divine consort of Lord Ram & an incarnation of Goddess Laxmi)

Rāga Kedārā

(41)

कबहुँक अंब, अवसर पाइ ।
मेरिऔ सुधि द्याइबी, कछु करुन—कथा चलाइ ।।1।।
दीन, सब अँगहीन, छीन, मलीन, अघी अघाइ ।
नाम लै भरै उदर एक प्रभु—दासी—दास कहाइ ।।2।।
बूझिहैं 'सो है कौन', कहिबी नाम दसा जनाइ ।
सुनत राम कृपालुके मेरी बिगरिऔ बनि जाइ ।।3।।
जानकी जगजननि जनकी किये बचन सहाइ ।
तरै तुलसीदास भव तव नाथ—गुन—गन गाइ ।।4।।

(41)

kabahum̐ka amba, avasara pā'i.
mēri'au sudhi dyā'ibī, kachu karuna-kathā calā'i. 1.
dīna, saba aṁgahīna, chīna, malīna, aghī aghā'i.
nāma lai bharai udara ēka prabhu-dāsī-dāsa kahā'i. 2.
būjhihair̐ 'sō hai kauna', kahibī nāma dasā janā'i.
sunata rāma krpālukē mērī bigari'au bani jā'i. 3.
jānakī jagajanani janakī kiyē bacana sahā'i.
tarai tulasīdāsa bhava tava nātha-guna-gana gā'i. 4.

Verse no. 41—Oh Mother (amba)! [This refers to Sita¹, the divine consort of Lord Ram. She was an incarnation of goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of creation who had himself manifested as Lord Ram.] If you find an opportunity, initiate some talk with Lord Ram regarding the subject of compassion and mercy, and then while on the topic please be kind to raise the issue of my desperately pitiful state and miserable condition to discretely remind the Lord about me. (That would be enough for me!) (1).

Just say that a person, who is the most wretched, meek, weak, poor, miserable, devoid of all resources, distressed in mind, and who is very sinful, calls himself a servant (devotee) of your maid (known as 'Tulsi'—and hence has acquired the name of 'Tulsidas' for himself), and fills his stomach (i.e. survives; quenches his hunger) on the strength of your name (or, exploits your name to satisfy his hunger by begging and seeking alms in your name). (2).

When the Lord enquires 'who is that person?', tell him my name and inform him of my most wretched condition. When the merciful and compassionate Lord Ram just hears this much (my name and condition), then all my problems would be over

(because he is so merciful and compassionate that he would immediately initiate steps to redeem me). (3).

Oh Janki (literally meaning ‘the daughter of Janak’), the mother of the world! If you can be gracious enough to help this servant just by your words (as requested above), this humble Tulsidas would cross this ocean of mundane, gross and mortal existence called the ‘Bhav-Sagar’ by singing the majestic glories and divine virtues of your Lord (Lord Ram). [In other words, Tulsidas would make your Lord world famous by composing beautiful poetry or hymns in his honour that would encapsulate all the stupendous glories of the Lord. These hymns would be matchless, and sung for all times to come.] (4).

[Note—*Tulsidas has dedicated verse nos. 41—42 to honour Sita, the consort of Lord Ram. She was also known as ‘Janki’ because she was the daughter of king Janak.

Sita was an incarnation of goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of creation who had himself manifested as Lord Ram. Since Vishnu is the Supreme Being and the Father of the world, his manifested form as Lord Ram too was deemed to be a Father. And hence, Sita, Ram’s wife, was too a ‘Mother’. We read in line no. 1 of the next verse no. 42 that Tulsidas has explicitly called Sita as ‘Mother Janki’.

Sita was the divine consort of Lord Ram. If Ram was an incarnate Vishnu then Sita was goddess Laxmi, the heavenly consort of Vishnu and the patron goddess of wealth and prosperity. If Ram is to be treated as a personified form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm then Sita is Maya (delusion creating powers of Brahm) personified. The Sita Upanishad is the 9th Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, and it describes the metaphysical importance of Sita. She was the daughter of king Janak. She is also known as ‘Vaidehi’ meaning the daughter of Videha, another name of Janak as well as the kingdom where he ruled.

Regarding the story of the birth of Sita, it is narrated in Adbhut Ramayan, Canto 8, verse nos. 36-44. This Ramayan is purported to have been written by sage Valmiki. Sita’s father Janak had no heirs. He was advised by sages to perform a fire-sacrifice. While the ground was being prepared for the altar of the sacred fire, the head of the plough got stuck into a pot buried in the ground. When it was taken out, it was discovered that it contained an infant girl. In the beginning the king thought that this was a bad omen, but his royal priest and other sages who had assembled there advised him that this girl would give him immense fame and a chance to meet the Supreme Lord. Since this lovely girl was discovered when the ploughshare got stuck in the ground, she was named ‘Sita’—meaning precisely this, the ‘tip or edge of the ploughshare’.

It is also narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, in its Baal Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 58-to-75.

Again, since Sita was born from the Mother Earth, she was also regarded as the daughter of Prithivi (earth). Earth is regarded as the foot of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-encompassing vast form of the Supreme Being. This is why Laxmi, whose incarnation was Sita, is invariably depicted to be seated near the feet of Lord Vishnu, another name of the Viraat Purush. It was this Lord Vishnu who had manifested himself as Lord Ram of Ayodhya to whom Sita was married. This is natural to expect because Laxmi is the eternal divine consort of Vishnu.]

(42)

कबहुँ समय सुधि दायबी, मेरी मातु जानकी ।

जन कहाइ नाम लेत हौं, किये पन चातक ज्यों, प्यास प्रेम—पानकी ।।1।।
 सरल प्रकृति आपु जानिए करुना—निधानकी ।
 निजगुन, अरिकृत अनहितौ, दास—दोष, सुरति चित रहत न, दिये दानकी ।।2।।
 बानि बिसारनसील है मानद अमानकी ।
 तुलसीदास न बिसारिये, मन करम बचन जाके, सपनेहुँ गति न आनकी ।।3।।

(42)

kabahum^ṁ samaya sudhi dyāyabī, mērī mātu jānakī.
 jana kahā'i nāma lēta hauṁ, kiyē pana cātaka jyōm, pyāsa prēma-pānakī. 1.
 sarala prakṛti āpu jāni'ē karunā-nidhānakī.
 nijaguna, arikṛta anahitau, dāsa-dōṣa, surati cita rahata na, diyē dānakī. 2.
 bāni bisāranasīla hai mānada amānakī.
 tulasīdāsa na bisāriyē, mana karama bacana jākē, sapanēhum^ṁ gati na ānakī.
 3.

Verse no. 42—Oh mother Janki (Sita)! Remind Lord Ram about me if you get an opportunity. I am called his servant (loyal follower; devotee), I chant his name, and am sitting eagerly waiting for him like a Papiha (the bird 'sparrow hawk') because I am thirsty for the nectar of the Lord's affection just like the bird waits eagerly for the rain drops of the Swati Nakshatra to quench its thirst. [The Papiha drinks only the rain drops that fall during a special constellation called Swati, literally meaning a dew-drop. Otherwise it prefers to die of thirst. Similarly, Tulsidas prefers to quench his emotional and spiritual thirst by being blessed by the love and affection of Lord Ram, and seeks no other solace and succour.] (1).

You (Sita) are fully aware that the Lord (Ram) has a very sweet and amiable nature. He does not remember his own greatness or exalted stature or even his eclectic virtues and qualities (i.e. he has no sense of ego, self-pride, haughtiness or vanity). Similarly, he does not remember the crimes committed even by his enemies, the faults and misdemeanors of his servants, devotees or followers, and whatever has been given by him as charity (i.e. he does not boast of being forgiving, compassionate, magnanimous, and a good-doer, nor does he expect anything in return). (2).

His habit is to forget (and forgive). He gives respect to even those wretched and lowly persons who do not get respect anywhere else, and he forgets even this (i.e. he does not embarrass anyone by teasing him with constant reminders of help and respect that was given to him without being eligible to deserve such honours). Oh mother! You tell him not to forget Tulsidas because he has no hope of expecting any kind of support, succour and solace from anyone else (except Lord Ram) even in his dreams, or due to the good effects of any of his deeds, words (speech) or thoughts (i.e. his deeds, speech and thoughts are so corrupt and mired in worldly faults that there is not the slightest of hope of redemption of Tulsidas by merely relying on them). (3).

Prayers offered to Lord Rām

(43)

जयति

सच्चिदव्यापकानंद परब्रह्म-पद, विग्रह-व्यक्त लीलावतारी ।
विकल ब्रह्मादि सुर, सिद्ध संकोचवश, विमल गुण-गेह नर-देह-धारी ।।1।।

जयति

कोशलाधीश कल्याण कोशलसुता, कुशल कैवल्य-फल चारु चारी ।
वेद-बोधित करम-धरम-धरनी-धेनु, विप्र-सेवक साधु-मोदकारी ।।2।।
जयति ऋषि-मखपाल, शमन सज्जन-साल, शापवश मुनिवधू-पापहारी ।
भंजि भवचाप, दलि दाप भूपावली, सहित भृगुनाथ नतमाथ भारी ।।3।।
जयति धारमिक-धुर, धीर रघुवीर गुर-मातु-पितु-बंधु-वचनानुसारी ।
चित्रकूटाद्रि विन्ध्याद्रि दंडकविपिन, धन्यकृत पुन्यकानन-विहारी ।।4।।
जयति पाकारिसुत-काक-करतूति-फलदानि खानि गर्त गोपित विराधा ।
दिव्य देवी वेष देखि लखि निशिचरी जनु विडंबित करी विश्वबाधा ।।5।।
जयति खर-त्रिशिर-दूषण चतुर्दश-सहस-सुभट-मारीच-संहारकर्ता ।
गृध्र-शबरी-भक्ति-विवश करुणासिंधु, चरित निरुपाधि, त्रिविधार्तिहर्ता ।।6।।
जयति मद-अंध कुकबंध बधि, बालि बलशालि बधि, करन सुग्रीव राजा ।
सुभट मर्कट-भालु-कटक-संघट सजत, नमत पद रावणानुज निवाजा ।।7।।
जयति पाथोधि-कृत-सेतु कौतुक हेतु, काल-मन-अगम लई ललकि लंका ।
सकुल, सानुज, सदल दलित दशकंठ रण, लोक-लोकप किये रहित-शंका ।।8।।
जयति सौमित्रि-सीता-सचिव-सहित चले पुष्पकारुढ़ निज राजधानी ।
दासतुलसी मुदित अवधवासी सकल, राम भे भूप वैदेहि रानी ।।9।।

(43)

jayati

saccidavyāpakānanda parabrahma-pada, vighraha-vyakta līlāvatārī.
vikala brahmādi sura, sid'dha saṅkōcavaśa, vimala guṇa-gēha nara-dēha-
dhārī. 1.

jayati

kōśalādhiśa kalyāṇa kōśalasutā, kuśala kaivalya-phala cāru cārī.
vēda-bōdhita karama-dharama-dharanī-dhēnu, vipra-sēvaka sādhu-mōdakārī.
2.

jayati ṛṣi-makhapāla, śamana sajjana-sāla, śāpavaśa munivadhū-pāpahārī.
bharjī bhavacāpa, dali dāpa bhūpāvalī, sahita bhr̥gunātha natamātha bhārī. 3.
jayati dhāramika-dhura, dhīra raghuvīra gura-mātu-pitu-bandhu-
vacanānusārī.

citrakūṭādrī vindhyādrī daṇḍakavipina, dhan'yakṛta pun'yakānana-vihārī. 4.

jayati pākārisuta-kāka-karatūti-phaladāni khāni gatṛta gōpita virādhā.
divya dēvī vēśa dēkhi lakhi niśicarī janū viḍambita karī viśvabādhā. 5.

jayati khara-triśira-dūṣaṇa caturdaśa-sahasa-subhaṭa-mārīca-sanhārakatṛtā.
gr̥dhra-śabarī-bhakti-vivaśa karuṇāsindhu, carita nirupādhi, trividhārtihatṛtā.
6.

jayati mada-andha kukabandha badhi, bāli balaśālī badhi, karana sugrīva rājā.
subhaṭa markāṭa-bhālu-kaṭaka-saṅghaṭa sajata, namata pada rāvaṇānuja
nivājā. 7.

jayati pāthōdhi-kṛta-sētu kautuka hētu, kāla-mana-agama la'ī lalaki laṅkā.
sakula, sānuja, sadala dalita daśakaṇṭha raṇa, lōka-lōkapa kiyē rahita-śaṅkā.
8.

jayati saumitri-sītā-saciva-sahita calē puṣpakārūrha nija rājadhānī.
dāsatalasī mudita avadhavāsī sakala, rāma bhē bhūpa vaidēhi rānī. 9.

Verse no. 43— Glory to Lord Ram*! You are the supreme transcendental Brahm who is Truth and pure Consciousness personified, is omnipresent and all-pervading, and is an embodiment of eternal happiness and bliss. [That is, you are the Supreme Being personified.]

You are invisible, formless and without attributes, but to give effect to your maverism you have assumed a form that is visible and has attributes. When the creator Brahma as well as other Gods and acclaimed sages and seers were overwhelmed by the horrors of uncountable torments and miseries that were inflicted upon them by the cruel demons, then to give them relief from the horrible distress they were being subjected to and alleviate their sufferings you had taken the form of a human (i.e. incarnated yourself on this earth in the visible form of Ram) because you could not deny them your help. (1).

Glory to you! You took birth in the household of the righteous king Dashrath of the Kaushal dynasty and his auspicious consort queen Kaushalaya as four brothers who represented the four divine fruits that can bestow to the creature the rewards of Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation). [The four brothers were Ram, Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan.]

You gave joys and exhilaration to Vedic ritualistic practices, Dharma (the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, scrupulousness, noble conduct, probity and propriety) mother earth, (holy) cow, Brahmins (upper-castes, or essentially meaning the wise teacher-class), devotees and Sadhus (the pure-hearted ones). [That is, you made them fearless; you reinstated their honour and self-respect, and sustained them.] (2).

Glory to you! You had protected sage Vishwamitra's Yagya (a Vedic ritual in which fire-sacrifice was done) after killing the demons (who were interfering with it, obstructing it and defiling it)¹. You had suppressed the evil ones who endlessly tormented those who were noble and holy. You had liberated Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, from the curse arising out a sin that resulted in her being turned into a stone². You had vanquished and crushed the ego, haughtiness, vanity and false-pride of all the princes (who had come to marry Sita in a ceremony called 'Swayambar' at Janakpur) by breaking the stern and strong bow that symbolized this formidable world, and had thus put to shame not only these princes but also vanquished the sense of false pride, haughtiness and arrogance about his own strength and valour that sage Parashuram had, so much so that the latter lowered his head in surrender and humility. [This incident refers to the marriage ceremony of Lord Ram and Sita as narrated in detail in the epic Ramayana.] (3).

Glory to you! You are steady and determined while bearing the burden (responsibility) of upholding the virtues of Dharma (auspiciousness, righteousness, scrupulousness, probity and propriety). You are an extraordinarily courageous warrior of king Raghu's clan. Giving due respect to (i.e. obeying) the words (or wishes) of your father, mother, Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) and brother (Bharat), you had

obliged them by coming to the forest, and in the process you had made the three great forests by the name of Chitrakoot, Vindhyachal and Dandak most holy and auspicious by wondering in them. [That is, you had gone to the forest on the orders of your parents and to uphold the wishes of others, and had resided in these three forests for some time, thereby purifying them and making them holy and venerated.] (4).

Glory to you! You gave a befitting answer to Indra's deceitful, crooked, cunning and lascivious son (named Jayant) who was in the form of a crow for his despicable and damnable act³. [Jayant, in the form of a crow, had pricked at Sita by its beak. Lord Ram had shot an arrow to punish him, but finally forgave him by merely blinding him in one eye. It is believed that crows became one-eyed since this incident.]

You had dug a grave (a pit) and buried the demon Viradh in it. You had got the ear and nose of Supernakha, the sister of the demon Ravana, chopped-off when she had come disguised as a young maiden (to lure the Lord with her charms with the intention of killing him), thereby symbolically challenging the might of Ravana, who was the tormentor of the whole world, by insulting him in the guise of maiming his sister. (5).

Glory to you! You are the slayer of (the demons) Khar, Dushan, Trishira, their 14-thousand strong army, and Marich (who had taken the form of a golden deer to lure Lord Ram away from his hermitage so that Ravana could kidnap Sita). You are the liberator of the cadaver-eating vulture named Jatayu as well as of the low-caste woman named Sabari. You are an ocean of mercy, compassion, kindness and grace. You are faultless, taintless and without blemishes. You are the one who dispels and eliminates the fear and evil effects of the three torments or horrors associated with life, called the Triatap. [These horrors are—Adhyatmik, i.e. those related to spiritual life; Adhibhautik, i.e. those related to the terrestrial world and mundane life on earth; and Adhidaivik which relates to the problems arising from malignant stars and gods.] (6).

Glory to you! You are the slayer of the wicked and proud demon named Kabandh. You had made Sugriva the king (of Kishkindha) after slaying the most powerful Bali. You had collected and properly arranged a huge army of brave monkeys and bears (for your conquest of Lanka, killing of Ravana, and liberation of Sita from her captivity at Lanka). And you had graciously granted the boons of devotion and liberation to Vibhishan who had taken refuge with you. (7).

Glory to you! You had constructed a bridge across the ocean as a playful activity. You had cheerfully grabbed (conquered) Lanka which was beyond the imagination of even Kaal (the god of death), and had killed Ravana in the battle-field along with his entire clan, including his brother, and his huge army, thereby making the three Lokas (i.e. the heaven known as the Swarga Loka, the earth known as the Bhu Loka, and the subterranean world known as the Patal Loka), Indra (king of Gods), Kuber (the God's treasurer) and other protectors of Lokas (or the Lokpals) fearless and free from the horrors of Ravana and his demon race. (8).

Glory to you! After conquering Lanka you had gone back to your capital Ayodhya along with Saumitri (literally the son of mother Sumitra; i.e. Laxman, Ram's brother), Sita, Sugriva, Hanuman and other ministers aboard the plane called 'Pushpak'. Tulsidas cheerfully narrates by way of a ballad about the fact that all the residents of Ayodhya were extremely exhilarated, excited, exuberant, happy and jubilant when

Lord Ram became a king and Vaidehi (Sita) became the queen (upon their return the their capital of Ayodhya from fourteen years of exile in the forest). (9).

[Note—*Briefly, Lord Ram was a human incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of creation. The reasons why Vishnu took a human form as Lord Ram have been narrated in all the versions of the story of Ramayana. For instance, Tulsidas' epic narration of this story known as 'Ram Charit Manas', extensively described the different reasons why Vishnu came down to earth as Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 121—to Doha no. 198.

Essentially, whenever powerful evil, sinful and pervert forces became ascendant in this world in the form of 'demons' and began to negate the auspicious virtues of Dharma (rightousness, probity, propriety, nobility and morality), whenever these forces assumed a notorious dimension that became too much for tolerance for the Supreme Lord of creation for the Lord who also had to take into consideration his responsibility of taking care of the other creatures of his creation who were suffering hugely due to these evil forces, the Lord was obliged, he was compelled to do something so as to restore the balance and ensure peace and order in his cosmic kingdom. Therefore, the Lord comes down himself to set things in order and restore the principles of Dharma.

In the case of Lord Ram, these negative and evil forces that tormented and horrified the rest of the creation were represented by the demon race led by their king Ravana of Lanka. Ravana and his brothers had done Tapa (penances) as a result of which they had armed themselves with some boons that made them invincible and virtually impossible to be eliminated except by the Lord's personal intervention as a human being. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 177 that explicitly say this thing.

Refer also to Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, Baal Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 6—32; and Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 10—15.

¹Protector of the sage's fire-sacrifice (ṛṣi-makhapāla): Sri Ram was taken by sage Vishwamitra to protect his fire-sacrifice which was constantly defiled and interrupted by the demons. Sri Ram guarded the sacrifice and slayed Tadka, Subahu and other demons, and threw Marich beyond the sea.

This episode is narrated in—(i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 206—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 210; and (ii) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 47—60.

²Ahilya's curse (śāpavaśa munivadhū-pāpahārī): Sage Gautam's wife Ahilya was very beautiful. Once Indra cheated her by posing as her husband while he was away. Incensed at this adulterous behaviour, sage Gautam cursed Indra to have thousands of holes in his body and Ahilya to become a stone. She was liberated from this cursed state when Sri Ram touched her with his foot en-route to Janakpur with sage Vishwamitra. This episode is narrated by Tulsidas in (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211; and (ii) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 57—59.

³The crow Jayant (pākārisuta-kāka-karatūti-phaladāni): Indra's son Jayant was once so enchanted by the beauty of Sita at Chitrakoot that he assumed the form of a crow and pricked her feet in jealousy and ran away. Sri Ram became so infuriated at his audacity that he shot a headless arrow at him. Finally, he let him off by a mild punishment of blinding him in his one eye. Legend has it that that is the reason why crows have only one useful eye. This episode is narrated by Tulsidas in Ram Charit

Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Sortha/Doha no. 2.]

(44)

जयति
 राज—राजेंद्र, राजीवलोचन, राम,
 नाम कलि—कामतरु, साम—शाली ।
 अनय—अंभोधि—कुंभज, निशाचर—निकर—
 तिमिर घनघोर—खरकिरणमाली ॥1॥
 जयति मुनि—देव—नरदेव दसरत्थके,
 देव—मुनि—वृंछ किय अवध—वासी ।
 लोकनायक—कोक—शोक—संकट—शमन,
 भानुकुल—कमल—कानन—विकासी ॥2॥
 जयति शृंगार—सर तामरस—दामदुति—
 देह, गुणगेह, विश्वोपकारी ।
 सकल सौभाग्य—सौंदर्य—सुषमारूप,
 मनोभव कोटि गर्वापहारी ॥3॥
 (जयति) सुभग सारंग सुनिखंग सायक शक्ति,
 चारु चर्मासि वर वर्मधारी ।
 धर्मधुरधीर, रघुवीर, भुज—बल अतुल,
 हेलया दलित भूभार भारी ॥4॥
 जयति कलधौत मणि—मुकुट, कुंडल, तिलक—
 झलक भलि भाल, विधु—वदन—शोभा ।
 दिव्य भूषण, बसन पीत, उपवीत,
 किय ध्यान कल्याण—भाजन न को भा ॥5॥
 (जयति) भरत—सौमित्रि—शत्रुघ्न—सेवित, सुमुख,
 सचिव—सेवक—सुखद, सर्वदाता ।
 अधम, आरत, दीन, पतित, पातक—पीन
 सकृत् नतमात्र कहि 'पाहि' पाता ॥6॥
 जयति जय भुवन दसचारि जस जगमगत,
 पुन्यमय, धन्य जय रामराजा ।
 चरित—सुरसरित कवि—मुख्य गिरि निःसरित,
 पिबत, मज्जत मुदित सँत—समाजा ॥7॥
 जयति वर्णाश्रमाचारपर नारि—नर,
 सत्य—शम—दम—दया—दानशीला ।
 विगत दुख—दोष, संतोष सुख सर्वदा,
 सुनत, गावत राम राजलीला ॥8॥
 जयति वैराग्य—विज्ञान—वारानिधे,
 नमत नर्मद, पाप—ताप—हर्ता ।
 दास तुलसी चरण शरण संशय—हरण,
 देहि अवलंब वैदेहि—भर्ता ॥9॥

(44)

jayati
 rāja-rājendra, rājīvalōcana, rāma,
 nāma kali-kāmataru, sāma-śālī.
 anaya-ambhōdhi-kamubhaja, niśācara-nikara-
 timira ghanaghōra-kharakiraṇamālī. 1.
 jayati muni-dēva-naradēva dasarat'thakē,
 dēva-muni-vandya kiya avadha-vāsī.
 lōkanāyaka-kōka-śōka-saṅkaṭa-śamana,
 bhānukula-kamala-kānana-vikāsī. 2.
 jayati śṛṅgāra-sara tāmarasa-dāmaduti-
 dēha, guṇagēha, viśvōpakārī .
 sakala saubhāgya-saundarya-suśamārūpa,
 manōbhava kōṭi garvāpahārī. 3.
 (jayati) subhaga sārāṅga sunikhaṅga sāyaka śakti,
 cāru carmāsi vara varmadhārī.
 dharmadhuradhīra, raghuvīra, bhuja-bala atula,
 hēlayā dalita bhūbhāra bhārī. 4.
 jayati kaladhautā maṇi-mukūṭa, kuṇḍala, tilaka-
 jhalaka bhali bhāla, vidhu-vadana-śōbhā.
 divya bhūṣana, basana pīta, upavīta,
 kiya dhyāna kalyāna-bhājana na kō bhā. 5.
 (jayati) bharata-saumitri-śatrughna-sēvita, sumukha,
 saciva-sēvaka-sukhada, sarvadātā.
 adhama, ārata, dīna, patita, pātaka-pīna
 sakṛta natamātra kahi 'pāhi' pātā. 6.
 jayati jaya bhuvana dasacāri jasa jagamagata,
 pun'yamaya, dhan'ya jaya rāmarājā.
 carita-surasarita kavi-mukhya giri nihsarita,
 pibata, majjata mudita samṛta-samājā. 7.
 jayati varṇāśramācārapara nāri-nara,
 satya-śama-dama-dayā-dānaśīlā.
 vigata dukha-dōṣa, santōṣa sukha sarvadā,
 sunata, gāvata rāma rājalīlā. 8.
 jayati vairāgya-vijñāna-vārānnidhē,
 namata narmada, pāpa-tāpa-hatrtā.
 dāsa tulasī caraṇa śaraṇa sanśaya-haraṇa,
 dēhi avalamba vaidēhi-bhatrtā. 9.

Verse no. 44— Glory to Lord Ram! He is like Indra (the king of Gods) amongst the great kings and emperors. His eyes are as beautiful and enchanting as a lotus flower. His name is like the Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree) in the era known as Kaliyug. He gives consolation and reassurance to devotees who have surrendered themselves before him. He is like sage Agastya to dry up the ocean of unrighteous and unethical actions and behaviour. And he is like the powerful Sun to remove (destroy, banish) the grave darkness (of delusions and ignorance) represented by the huge horde of great of demons. (1).

Glory to Lord Ram who is the son of king Dashrath, and the Lord of Gods, sages and seers as well as the humans! He had raised the residents of Ayodhya to such an exalted state that even saints, sages and Gods had begun to sing their glories and laurels, and praised their good fortunes. He is like the sun that removes the sorrows and agonies of the bird known as Chakva (ostrich; the ruddy-goose) representing the various custodians of the world who are called the Lokpals, as well as the one who has made the lotus flowers representing the members of the Solar race bloom and flourish. (2).

Glory to Lord Ram! The light blue tinge of his complexion glows like a garland of blue lotuses developing in a pond of beauty. He is the abode of all divine virtues, the benefactor of the whole world, and is the vanquisher of Kamdeo's pride and vanity with his form that is endowed by astounding charm and beauty, which is an embodiment of good virtues and auspiciousness, and which is most honourable and respected. (3).

Glory to Lord Ram! He wears a crown studded with jewels on his head as well as beautiful ear-rings. He has a Tilak mark on his forehead. [This is a religious symbol marked on the forehead above the nose.]

His countenance is as beautiful as the full moon. He is wearing a Pitambar (a seamless length of yellow cloth made of silk which is wrapped around the body), attractive jewelry, and the sacred thread across the shoulder. Is there anyone who has not benefited from such a bewitching, enthralling and enchanting view of Lord Ram that holds the eyes captivated and gives it contentedness? (5).

Glory to Lord Ram! He is being served by Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan. He is the wish fulfiller of not only his ministers such as Sugriv and Sumant but also of other devotees. He is the one who saves all (i.e. provides liberation and deliverance to all) from the cycle of birth and death, even those who are sinful, distressed, miserable, wretched and lowly if they bow once before him and plead sincerely by saying 'save me, my Lord!' (6).

Glory to Lord Ram! His fame is shining (i.e. is well known and established) in all the fourteen Bhuvans¹ (i.e. in the entire universe). He is absolutely divine, auspicious, holy and exalted. His life-story has been revealed by the ancient sage Valmiki (i.e. was first narrated or brought to light by him) just like the celestial river Ganges had made its appearance on earth from the mountains (Himalayas). By bathing in this holy river and drinking its water (i.e. by studying the divine story of Lord Ram and implementing its teachings in one's own life), the community of sages and saints remains ever contented and happy. [Here, Tulsidas has likened the story of Lord Ram with the holy river Ganges, for even as the holy water of the river is spiritually purifying by providing the reward of liberation and deliverance from this mortal world, the divine story of Lord Ram is also fully empowered and endowed with a similar characteristics of being the provider of liberation and deliverance to the creature who hears it with devotion and faith.] (7).

Glory to Lord Ram! (Describing the reign of king Ram, Tulsidas says—) During the Lord's famous reign, all men and women followed the honourable and righteous path of life that conformed to the principles set out for them by tradition in accordance to the class of society that belonged to. All of them diligently observed the path of

auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety. They were all truthful, self-restraint tolerant, benevolent, kind, gracious and charitable by nature. They were free from any kind of sorrows and miseries as well as from worldly corruptions and other faults. They were always contented, happy and blissful by all means, and were always engaged in singing the praises and glories of Lord Ram. (8).

Glory to Lord Ram! He is an ocean of the grand virtues of renunciation and supreme knowledge. He provides solace and comfort to all those who bow reverentially before him in humility (i.e. surrender themselves to him), besides banishing all their miseries and torments that accrue to them due to sins and misdemeanors.

Oh the Lord of Vaidehi (i.e. Lord Ram)! Oh the one who removes all doubts and confusions! Tulsidas has taken refuge in your feet, so please give him the solace and succour that are so characteristic of your holy feet (and for which they are so renowned in this world). (9).

[Note—¹The fourteen Bhuvans are the following—(A) The upper worlds called Urdhava Lokas are seven in number:—(i) Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha, (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, and (vii) Satyam. (B) The seven nether worlds called Adhaha Loka:— (i) Atal, (ii) Vital, (iii) Satal, (iv) Rasaatal, (v) Talaatal, (vi) Mahaatal, and (vii) Paataal.]

Advice to the Mind

Rāga Gaurī

(45)

श्री रामचंद्र कृपालु भजु मन हरण भवभय दारुणं ।
नवकंज—लोचन, कंज—मुख, कर—कंज, पद कंजारुणं ।।1।।
कंदर्प अगणित अमित छवि, नवनील नीरद सुंदरं ।
पट पीत मानहु तड़ित रुचि शुचि नौमि जनक—सुतावरं ।।2।।
भजु दीनबंधु दिनेश दानव—दैत्यवंश—निकंदनं ।
रघुनंद आनंदकंद कोशलचंद दशरथ—नंदनं ।।3।।
सिर मुकुट कुंडल तिलक चारु उदारु अंग विभूषणं ।
आजानुभुज शर—चाप—धर, संग्राम—जित—खरदूषणं ।।4।।
इति वदति तुलसीदास शंकर—शेष—मुनि—मन रंजनं ।
मम हृदय—कंज—निवास कुरु, कामादि खल—दल—गंजनं ।।5।।

(45)

śrī rāmacandra kṛpālu bhaju mana haraṇa bhavabhaya dāruṇaṁ.
navakaṇḍja-lōcana, kaṇḍja-mukha, kara-kaṇḍja, pada kaṇḍjāruṇaṁ. 1.
kandarpa agaṇita amita chavi, navaṇīla nīrada sundaraṁ.
paṭa pīta mānahu taḍita ruci śuci naumi janaka-sutāvaraṁ. 2.
bhaju dīnabandhu dinēśa dānava-daitya-vanśa-nikandanaṁ.

raghunanda ānamḍakanda kōśalacanda daśaratha-nandanam. 3.
 sira mukuṭa kuṇḍala tilaka cāru udāru aṅga vibhūṣaṇam.
 ājānubhujā śara-cāpa-dhara, saṅgrāma-jita-kharadūṣaṇam. 4.
 iti vadati tulasīdāsa śaṅkara-śēṣa-muni-mana raṇjānam.
 mama hr̥daya-kaṇja-nivāsa kuru, kāmādi khala-dala-gaṇjānam. 5.

Verse no. 45—Oh mind! Concentrate on, think of and devote yourself to Lord Ramchandra, the merciful, the kind, the benevolent and the compassionate Lord! He is the one who can remove the grave fear of birth and death in this world. His eyes are as beautiful as a newly blossomed lotus flower. His face, hands and feet are also like a red-tinged (pink) lotus. (1).

The beauty of his countenance is greater than innumerable Kamdeos (God of beauty and glamour) taken together. The complexion of his body has a blue tinge resembling rain-bearing dark clouds. The Pitambar (a yellow body-wrapping seamless cloth made of silk) is shining and simmering like lightening on his body, the complexion of which is compared with dark clouds. I offer my obeisance to and bow before the Lord of Janak-Suta (i.e. Lord Ram who is the divine husband of Sita, the daughter of Janak) who is a personification of auspiciousness and holiness. (2).

Oh my mind! Concentrate on, think of and devote yourself to (Lord Ram who is) a friend of the distressed and the humble, is as radiant, brilliant and splendorous as the sun, is a destroyer of the race of demons, evil spirits, ogres and Satan (representing evil and sinful creatures in creatures in this world), is the root of all joys and happiness, is symbolically like a moon which shines in the sky symbolizing the kingdom of Kaushal (Ayodhya). (3).

He has a crown that is studded with jewels and gems. He wears large ear-rings in his ears, an enchanting Tilak (religious mark) on his forehead, and beautiful jewelry on each part of his body. His arms are so long that they reach up to his knees. [Such long arms are regarded as auspicious for a king and indicate his long reach and extended influence. He is carrying a bow and an arrow. He has conquered the demons Khar and Dushan in the battle (i.e. he has conquered all the evil forces represented by them). (4).

He grants happiness and joys to the mind and heart of Lord Shiva, the mythical serpent-king known as Shesh, and great sages and hermits. He is the destroyer of enemies in the form of Kaam (lust, passions), Krodh (anger) and Lobha (greed, rapacity and avarice). Tulsidas prays that such a gracious and divine Lord Ram may always reside in his lotus-like heart. (5).

Rāga Rāmakalī

(46)

सदा

राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु, मूढ़ मन, बार बारं ।

सकल सौभाग्य—सुख—खानि जिय जानि शठ, मानि विश्वास वद वेदसारं ।।1।।
 कोशलेन्द्र नव—नीलकंजाभतनु, मदन—रिपु—कंजहृदि—चंचरीकं ।
 जानकीरवन सुखभवन भुवनैकप्रभु, समर—भंजन, परम कारुणीकं ।।2।।
 दनुज—वन—धूमधुज, पीन आजानुभुज, दंड—कोदंडवर चंड बानं ।
 अरुण कर चरण मुख नयन राजीव, गुन—अयन, बहु मयन—शोभा—निधानं ।।3।।
 वासनावृंद—कैरव—दिवाकर, काम—क्रोध—मद—कंज—कानन—तुषारं ।
 लोभ अति मत्त नागेंद्र पंचाननं भक्तहित हरण संसार—भारं ।।4।।
 केशवं, क्लेशहं, केश—वंदित पद—द्वंद्व मंदाकिनी—मूलभूतं ।
 सर्वदानंद—संदोह, मोहापहं, घोर—संसार—पाथोधि—पोतं ।।5।।
 शोक—संदेह—पाथोदपटलानिलं, पाप—पर्वत—कठिन—कुलिशरूपं ।
 संतजन—कामधुक—धेनु, विश्रामप्रद, नाम कलि—कलुष—भंजन अनूपं ।।6।।
 धर्म—कल्पद्रुमाराम, हरिधाम—पथि संबलं, मूलमिदमेव एकं ।
 भक्ति—वैराग्य—विज्ञान—शम—दान—दम, नाम आधीन साधन अनेकं ।।7।।
 तेन तप्तं, हुतं, दत्त्मेवाखिलं, तेन सर्वं कृतं कर्मजालं ।
 येन श्रीरामनामामृतं पानकृतमनिशमनवद्यमवलोक्य कालं ।।8।।
 श्वपच, खल, भिल्ल, यवनादिहरिलोकगत, नामबल विपुल मति मल न परसी ।
 त्यागि सब आस, संत्रास, भवपास, असि निसित हरिनाम जपु दासतुलसी ।।9।।

(46)

sadā

rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu, mūrha mana, bāra bāraṁ.

sakala saubhāgya-sukha-khāni jiya jāni śaṭha, māni viśvāsa vada vēdasāraṁ. 1.

kōśalēndra nava-nīlakanjābhatanu, madana-ripu-kanjahṛdi-cañcarīkaṁ. jānakīravana sukhabhavana bhuvanaikaprabhu, samara-bhañjana, parama kārunīkaṁ. 2.

danuja-vana-dhūmadhuja, pīna ājānubhuja, daṇḍa-kōdaṇḍavara caṇḍa bānaṁ.

aruṇa kara caraṇa mukha nayana rājīva, guna-ayana, bahu mayana-śōbhā-nidhānaṁ. 3.

vāsanāvṛnda-kairava-divākara, kāma-krōdha-mada-kañja-kānana-tuṣāraṁ. lōbha ati matta nāgēndra pañcānanaṁ bhaktahita haraṇa sansāra-bhāraṁ. 4. kēśavaṁ, klēśahaṁ, kēśa-vandita pada-dvandva mandākinī-mūlabhūtaṁ. sarvadānanda-sandōha, mōhāpaharaṁ, ghōra-sansāra-pāthōdhi-pōtaṁ. 5. śōka-sandēha-pāthōdapaṭalānilaṁ, pāpa-parvata-kāṭhina-kuliśarūpaṁ. santajana-kāmadhuka-dhēnu, viśrāmaprada, nāma kali-kaluṣa-bhañjana anūpaṁ. 6.

dharma-kalpadrumārāma, haridhāma-pathi sambalaṁ, mūlamidamēva ēkaṁ. bhakti-vairāgya-vijñāna-śama-dāna-dama, nāma ādhīna sādhana anēkaṁ. 7.

tēna taptaṁ, hutaṁ, dattmēvākhilaṁ, tēna sarvaṁ kṛtaṁ karmajālaṁ. yēna śrīrāmanāmāmṛtaṁ pānakṛtamaniśamanavadyamavalōkya kālaṁ. 8.

śvapaca, khala, bhilla, yavanādiharilōkagata, nāmabala vipula mati mala na parasi.

tyāgi saba āsa, santrāsa, bhavapāsa, asi nisita harināma japu dāsatulasī. 9.

Verse no. 46—Oh you foolish mind! Always chant and keep repeating Lord Ram's holy and divine name 'RAM' persistently, consistently, unwaveringly and constantly at all times because it is the mine and treasure-trove of all good fortunes, auspiciousness, happiness and joy. This is what the Vedas have reiterated and is the essence of their teachings. [Realizing this fact in your heart, and having full belief, faith and conviction in it, you should always pronounce Lord Ram's name.] (1).

The charm and radiance of the beauteous form of Kaushalendra (literally the King of Kaushal, here meaning Lord Ram) is like a newly bloomed blue lotus flower. He is a bee that dwells in the lotus-like heart of the Lord who is an enemy of Kamdeo. [This refers to Lord Shiva who had turned Kamdeo to ashes.] He stays with Janki (i.e. is the constant companion of Sita, as he is her divine husband). He is an abode of bliss, happiness and joys. He is the only Lord of the entire universe. He is a destroyer of enemies in the battle-field. And he is most merciful, kind and compassionate. (2).

He (Lord Ram) is like a wild fire for the forest of demons. [That is, just like the fire destroys big forests, Lord Ram is able to get rid of great demons who stand for evil, dark, decadent, pervert and corrupt tendencies in this world, as well as equally evil thoughts, actions and behaviours.] He holds a beautiful bow and fierce (invincible) arrows in his muscular arms that are so long as to reach the knees. His hands (palms), feet (sole), face and eyes are attractive and alluring like a red lotus. He is an abode of all good virtues and a treasury of beauty that is comparable to numerous Kamdeos taken together. (3).

He is like the sun personified for the purpose of abolishing the negative qualities of Vasanas (worldly yearning, lust and passion for the objects of the senses) symbolized by the Kumudini (a type of lotus that shrinks in sunlight). Similarly, he is like frost for the purpose of destroying the forest of lotuses symbolizing such negative qualities as Kaam (lust, desire, passion, infatuation and lasciviousness), Krodh (anger), Mada (haughtiness, arrogance), etc. He is like a lion, the king of forest, for the wild and arrogant elephant representing Lobh (greed, avarice, rapacity). He is the slayer of demons for the benefit of his devotees, as well as to remove the burden of the entire world tyrannized by these demons (symbolizing evils and vices; those rascals who are universal tormentors of innocent creatures; those who are miscreants who are sinful, unrighteous, unscrupulous, and pervert). (4).

His name is Keshav, and he is the destroyer or eliminator of troubles, tribulations, sorrows and agonies of all sorts. His feet, which are the fount (spring) from where river Ganges had emerged, is worshipped by Lords Brahma (the creator) and Shiva (the annihilator). He is always a bouquet (a treasury) of Anand (bliss, happiness and joy). He is an eliminator of all forms of Moha (attachments, attractions, infatuations and delusions). And he is like a ship to cross the great ocean known as Bhav-Sagar (literally the mortal world of mundane existence that is huge and endless, as well as entrapping for the creature). (5).

Lord Ram is like a strong gust of wind to disperse clouds of sorrows and doubts. He is like a Vajra (thunderbolt; the strong weapon of Indra) for the purpose of reducing to rubble the formidable mountain of sins. His name gives the desired fruits to saints like

a Kamdhenu cow does. He is a bestower of bliss, beatitude and felicity. And he is matchless in eliminating all the great sins that are characteristic of Kaliyug. (6).

The holy name of Lord Ram is a like an evergreen garden of Kalpa Trees representing Dharma (auspiciousness, righteousness, virtuousness). It is like the sanctified meal that is to be accepted by the travelers who are en-route to the abode of the Lord. [That is, the holy name of Lord Ram sustains spiritual seekers of emancipation and salvation; it is the mainstay of those who want liberation and deliverance from this gross delusory world.]

It is the fount as well as the foundation of all resources and accomplishments. [That is, the holy name of the Lord is the only means by which one can attain success in any kind of endeavour in this world. All achievements revolve around one's devotion for the Lord and his reliance on his holy name.]

The various means of salvation—such as Bhakti (devotion), Vairagya (renunciation), Vigyan (expert and truthful knowledge), Sham (equanimity, restraint), Dam (fortitude, tolerance), Daan (charity) etc.—are all dependant on Lord Ram's holy name. [They subsist on the Lord's name. That is why it is an established tradition to start anything or any kind of work by invoking the Lord's name first at the beginning of the effort or enterprise.] (7).

Those who have constantly, consistently and persistently imbibed this purified nectar of Lord Ram's name in an abiding form and as a matter of natural habit in the present ferocious and cruel era marked by horrors and torments—they are deemed to have done (i.e. they get the benefit of doing) all types of Tapas (penances, austerities, rigid following of codes of conduct), have performed all Yagyas (religious rituals and sacrifices), have given everything in charity, and have done all the sacraments and rituals sanctioned by the Vedas. [That is, the simple name of Lord Ram is a one-window solution for all the problems tormenting the creature. It is one-dose remedy for all ills afflicting the creature. It encapsulates in it all the spiritual rewards that accrue by doing Tapa, Yagya and Vedic rituals etc.] (8).

Numerous Chandals (out-castes), sinners, Bhils (tribal hunters) and Yavans (heretics, non-believers) etc. have gone to the abode of the Lord on the immense strength of Lord Ram's name, and its astounding good effects and potential powers as a liberator and deliverer. All the vices and evils of this world dared not to touch their wisdom and intellect (i.e. these vices could not corrupt or mislead them).

Oh Tulsidas! Abandon all fears and all kind of hopes from any other source, and instead chant Lord Ram's holy name which is like a sharp-edged sword to cut through the bindings and snares of this mundane world characterized by delusions and entrapments. (9).

Āratī of Lord Rāma

(worship by showing lighted lamp)

ऐसी आरती राम रघुबीरकी करहि मन ।
हरन दुखदुंद गोबिंद आनन्दघन ॥1॥
अचरचर रूप हरि, सरबगत, सरबदा बसत, इति बासना धूप दीजै ।
दीप निजबोधगत—कोह—मद—मोह—तम, प्रौढ़अभिमान चितवृत्ति छीजै ॥2॥
भाव अतिशय विशद प्रवर नैवेद्य शुभ श्रीरमण परम संतोषकारी ।
प्रेम—तांबूल गत शूल संशय सकल, विपुल भव—वासना—बीजहारी ॥3॥
अशुभ—शुभकर्म—घृतपूर्ण दश वर्तिका, त्याग पावक, सतो गुण प्रकास ।
भक्ति—वैराग्य—विज्ञान दीपावली, अर्पि नीराजनं जगनिवासं ॥4॥
विमल हृदि भवन कृत शांति पर्यंक शुभ, शयन विश्राम श्रीरामराया ।
क्षमा—करुणा प्रमुख तत्र परिचारिका, यत्र हरि तत्र नहिं भेद, माया ॥5॥
एहि आरति—निरत सनकादि, श्रुति, शेष, शिव, देवरिषि, अखिलमुनि तत्त्व—दरसी ।
करै सोइ तरै, परिहरै कामादि मल, वदति इति अमलमति—दास तुलसी ॥6॥

(47)

aisī āratī rāma raghubīrakī karahi mana.
harana dukhadunda gōbinda ānandaghana. 1.
acaracara rūpa hari, sarabagata, sarabadā basata, iti bāsanā dhūpa dijai.
dīpa nijabōdhagata-kōha-mada-mōha-tama, praur̥ha'abhimāna citabr̥tti chījai.
2.
bhāva atīśaya viśada pravara naivēdya śubha śrīramaṇa parama santōṣakārī.
prēma-tāmbūla gata sūla sanśaya sakala, vipula bhava-vāsanā-bījahārī. 3.
aśubha-śubhakarma-ghṛtapūr̥ṇa daśa vartikā, tyāga pāvaka, satōguṇa
prakāsaṁ.
bhakti-vairāgya-vijñāna dīpāvalī, arpi nīrājanaṁ jaganivāsaṁ. 4.
vimala hṛdi bhavana kṛta śānti paryaṅka śubha, śayana viśrāma śrīrāmarāyā.
kṣamā-karuṇā pramukha tatra paricārikā, yatra hari tatra nahiṁ bhēda, māyā.
5.
ēhi ārati-nirata sanakādi, śruti, śēṣa, śiva, dēvariṣi, akhilaṁ muni tatva-darasī.
karai sō'i tarai, pariharai kāmādi mala, vadati iti amalāmati-dāsa tulasī. 6.

Verse no. 47—[Tulsidas addresses his mind and says—] ‘Oh my Mind! Worship, venerate and pay your obeisance to Lord Ram, who is the brave Lord in the dynasty of king Raghu, by doing the Lord’s ‘Aarti’* in a symbolic manner. While doing this Aarti, you should pray to the Lord and remember the Lord’s glories and magnificent virtues as follows—“The Lord is the destroyer of all forms of miseries, sorrows and grief. He is the one who eliminates all confusions, doubts, consternations, perplexities and bewilderments. He is known as Govind who is a treasury of immense bliss, happiness, joy, beatitude and felicity. (1).

Both the animate as well as the inanimate world is a manifestation of Lord Hari (Vishnu) who is all-pervading, omnipresent and eternal.” [While performing the formal form of worship of the Lord by doing his Aarti, follow the following procedure—]

First, burn the various Vasanas (inherent worldly tendencies; desires, lust pertaining to the sense objects of this material world) symbolically in the form of ‘Dhup’ (perfumed incense-sticks) that are lighted during formal worship—this will remove all the foul smell of Bhed in the environment. [Bhed is spiritually corrupting

sense of duality that incites a creature to differentiate between Saguna or formed and Nirguna or un-formed aspects of the same universal cosmic Lord who is non-dual and immutable.]

As the next step, one should light the ‘Deepak’ (earthen lamps)—that is, he must light the lamp of self-realisation and enlightenment. [That is, the worshipper must strive to become aware of the true nature of the Atma which is his true self and the pure consciousness that is a personification of Brahm, the Supreme Being. He should remove the darkness of ignorance by ‘lighting’ the lamp of wisdom, self-realisation and enlightenment.]

This would remove the darkness symbolized by such negativity as Krodh (anger), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness) and Moha (worldly attachments, infatuations). With this maturity of spiritual wisdom and enlightenment, destroy the inherent inclinations of the mind and intellect called the Chitta Vritis. (2).

After that, offer the ‘sweets’ to the Lord in the form of sincerity and highly devotional emotions—such a pure offering of sweets will be most acceptable to Sri Raman (i.e. Lord Vishnu incarnated as Ram). Next, offer the Lord ‘Tambul’ (betel-leaf and nut) of love and affection. This offering is potent enough to destroy the seed or cause from which all sorts of sorrows, miseries and pains, all sorts of doubts and confusions, and all sorts of worldly passions and yearnings leading to delusions and entrapments arise. (3).

Thereafter, show the Lord ‘light’ of good and auspicious virtues by dipping the wick representing the ten sense organs¹ in the clarified butter (Ghee) of good deeds, and lighted by the fire of renunciation (Tyag). In this way, perform the ‘Aarti’ (ceremonial showing the light of lamps)—symbolized by the eclectic virtues of devotion, renunciation and enlightenment—of the Lord who pervades throughout the creation and is inherently present in it in a subtle, uniform and universal manner. (4).

After performing the Aarti, give ‘rest’ to Lord Ram on a bedstead of peace in the ‘temple’ of your purified heart. Appoint chief ‘maids’ in the form of forgiveness, mercy etc. to serve the Lord there (in your heart as the Lord reclined in it). Wherever Lord Hari (Vishnu; here referring to Lord Ram) lives, there is no room for delusions, confusions and doubts of any kind. (5).

The sages Sankadi², Veda-vyas³, Shukdeo⁴, Narad⁵ and other wise ones, as well as the Gods, Lord Sesh-Nath⁶ and Lord Shiva are always engaged in performing such a symbolic ‘Aarti’ of the Lord (as described above). [That is, they worship the Lord in the prescribed manner outlined in this verse.]

Tulsidas, who strives to be a humble follower of such exalted and enlightened sages and wise ones (i.e. emulates their example), asserts that those who worship the Lord in this way (as described above) are indeed freed from the evils of Kaam (worldly passions and lust and their corrupting influences) etc., and are also able to cross the Bhav-Sagar (ocean representing this mortal, gross and mundane world of entrapments, the world consisting of the endless cycle of birth and death, and its accompanying horrifying miseries and tribulations). (6).

[Note—*“Aarti (ārati)” is a traditional form of worship wherein the object of worship is shown lighted lamp that is waved in front of the worshipped by the worshipper.

Arti is performed during all religious rites to honour the deity worshipped. When an honoured guest arrives at someone's place, he is also welcomed with a Arti. The plate containing the lighted oil lamps is moved in a clockwise fashion in front of the person or the deity concerned.

The light of the lamps is symbolic of the lighted path that stands for a bright future that is wished for the person to whom the Arti is shown. As for the worshipped deity, they indicate that the deity is being given great respect and honour.

The Arti is a tradition since ancient times in India. It is a gesture to show the concerned person that he is warmly welcome, that his best future is hoped for, and that all his misfortunes represented by darkness should be removed in the light of the lamps.

Refer to verse no. 48 below also.

¹The 10 sense organs referred to in stanza 4 are the following—the five organs of perception such as eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin, and the five organs of action such as hands, legs, mouth, excretory and reproductive.

²Sankadi—Sanatkumar and others called 'Sankaadi Rishis'—Sage Sanatkumar is considered as one of the four Manas Putras or the mental-born sons of the creator Brahma. The other three are Sanak, Sanat-sujaat and Sanandan. They are regarded in a perpetual state of boyhood. Together they are called 'Sanakaadi Rishis'.

Sanatkumar had taught the greatness of Vishnu to demon Vrittaasur, the enemy of Indra, the king of Gods. He also taught spiritual wisdom to sage Narad, the celestial sage.

Sanat-sujaat taught spiritual wisdom to Dhritrashtra who was the blind father of the Kauravas of the epic Mahabharat fame. Sanak is said to be an eternal companion of Lord Vishnu. Sanandan is regarded as the ancient preacher of the Sankhya Shastra, even more ancient than Kapil.

Sanatkumar, along with sages Pippalaad and Angira, had approached sage Atharva to ask him about the highest form of meditation, the different aspects of OM and the culmination of spiritual journey by realising Brahm in the form of Shambhu, one of the names of Lord Shiva, in Atharva Veda's Atharva-shikha Upanishad.

It is narrated in the Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 7, verse no. 8, that he had gone to Lord Kalagnirudra, one of the forms of Lord Shiva and who had first revealed this Upanishad to one sage Bhusund (Brahmans 1-6) to learn about the metaphysical importance and spiritual value of the Rudraksha beads. [Rudraksha beads are the seeds of the tree *Eleocarpus ganitrus*.]

According to Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Sanatkumar was taught how to wear the Tripundra, the three lines marked on the forehead of all Hindus, by Lord Kalagnirudra himself.

The Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 22 stresses the greatness of Lord Shiva known as Maheshwar by saying that even such great sages as Sankadi and Sanatsujat (i.e. sages Sanatkumar and others collectively called the Sankaadi Rishis) had praised and prayed to the Lord, implying that if these great sages had worshipped Shiva then the latter must surely be a great Lord.

³Veda-vyas— Sage and seer Veda Vyas was the great grandson of sage Vashistha, grandson of sage Shakti, and the son of sage Paraashar and his wife Satyavati, a fisherwoman. Since he had dark complexion, he was also called Krishna, and since he was born on an island, he was called Dvaipayaana. Hence his other name was Krishna Dvaipayaana.

He is said to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself. The Lord felt that the vast knowledge enshrined in the scriptures were so huge, jumbled up, abstract and complicated that they were beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. Further, till this time, everything was based on memory—hearing and speaking, passing from one generation of disciple to another generation in the oral form. There was a need to sort them out, to codify, systematise and classify this vast ocean of knowledge contained in the Vedas to make them more useful and handy.

So, Vishnu took the form of Veda Vyas to undertake this mammoth, daunting and formidable task. It is believed that Veda Vyas was born at the end of Dwapar Yug during the period of the Mahabharat war.

Soon after his birth, he took permission from his mother Satyawati and went to Badrinath in the Himalayas to do severe penances and austerities (Tapa), and he established his hermitage there. Hence, he was also called 'Badaraayana'.

Veda Vyas gathered all the Mantras of the hitherto undivided Vedas, edited them and grouped them according to the use to which they were put during fire sacrifices. He named them according to the class or section of the priests (called Ritwij) who would use them for their ritualistic practices, such as the fire sacrifices. This added another epithet to his name—viz. 'Vyas', the one who knew the Vedas like the back of his hands and was therefore able to classify and divide them into four distinct texts as they now exist; the one who is the best preacher of the subject and made it easy for dissemination and teaching purposes. He classified the Vedas into four basic texts called the Rik, the Atharva, the Sam and the Yajur Vedas.

The four classes of such expert priests and the relevant Vedas were—(i) 'Riks'—they were also the senior most priests who presided over the ritual, and were also called Hota. They chanted the hymns of the Rig Veda. (ii) 'Yajus'—these priests were junior to the Riks and were also called Adhwaryou, and they chanted the verse categorised as the Yajur Veda. (iii) 'Samans'—these priests were the chanters of the holy hymns in chorus, in a loud, clear and melodious voice. They can be called modern day classical singers who attend any great function or festivity. They were also called Udgata. The Sam Veda was meant for them. (iv) 'Atarvans'—these priests did the actual, physical offerings of oblations in the fire pit of the fire sacrifice. They were called Brahma because they represented the senior most God, and the hymns used by them were classified and collected under the name of the Atharva Veda. So, as we have seen, the basic function of this classification was to facilitate the performance of the fire sacrifice.

But this exercise did not give peace of mind to Veda Vyas. His soul was yearning for something higher than these futile ritualistic exercises. So, as a next step, he further classified the Vedas into various Sanhitas, the Brahamans, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads.

The result of this tireless exercise produced a much vaster tome of spiritual, philosophical and metaphysical literature so much so that Veda Vyas thought it necessary and fit to write the basic tenets and maxims of the Vedas into a single volume for quick referral. This was called 'Vedant Sutra', literally, the key to the Vedas.

The concept of the Vedas was still indigestible and daunting for the masses. So, he rendered the precepts palatable and within the grasp of the common man by resorting to the time-tested and more acceptable method of the story-telling form by writing the eighteen Purans and the eighteen sub-Prans—a stupendous literary achievement of mammoth proportions.

He had also penned the epic Mahabharat besides these eighteen Purans and eighteen sub-Purans. It is said that Ganesh, the most revered and wise son of Shiva who has the head of an elephant, was the scribe who wrote down the dictation of Mahabharat as Veda Vyas narrated it non-stop, a job which is not a child's play. It is also believed that inspite of remaining a chaste saint for life, he had begot the three legendary figures of Mahabharat, viz. Dhritraastra, Pandu and Vidur, from the wives of Vichitravirya at the behest of his mother Satyawati. He gave divine sight to Sanjay, the charioteer who narrated the on going famous battle of the Mahabharat to Dhritraastra who was blind. Being a contemporary sage of the Mahabharat period, he knew almost all the persons of this great epic.

During the reign of Kurus, he was revered by both the Kurus as well as their arch rivals, the Pandavas. Both the heroes of the epic Mahabharat war held him in high esteem. When he decided to write the story of Mahabharat—the documentary

narration of the epic story of clan-fight and the devastating war that followed it—he chose Lord Ganesh as his scribe; Veda Vyas had dictated while Ganesh had written the epic. It is said that the site where the epic Mahabharat was written is called ‘Vyas Gufa’ (Vyas' cave) located near Bharoach while the place where he did his final Tapa is called Vyas Ashram located in the village of Mana two miles from the shrine of Badrinath in the Himalayas. His hermitage during the epic Mahabharat war was located in a village about ten miles north of the city of Ambala in Haryana state. River Saraswati flows nearby. This place is also famous as Vyas Ashram.

Time flew by, but still Veda Vyas did not get peace at heart. Once, while he sat near river Saraswati, full of remorse, unsatisfied and contrite, sage Narad came to him and advised him to write Srimad Bhagwat containing 18000 Slokas. This voluminous work gave him his final peace, so it is said.

His Guru was sage Yagyavalkya. His son was sage Shukdeo, the parrot saint. Veda Vyas chose five chief disciples who were initiated by him in the four Vedas and Purans. They were as follows—(a) He taught Rig Veda to his disciple named Paila; (b) Yajur Veda to his disciple Vaishampaayana; (c) Sam Veda to his disciple Jaimini; (d) Atharva Veda to his disciple Sumanthu; and (e) the Purans to his disciple Ramharshan.

It is believed that sage Veda Vyas still lives, albeit in an invisible, intangible and subtle form in the shape of the vast repertoire of spiritual, philosophical and metaphysical literature that he has created for humankind, something which is not possible for any ordinary human being. These fortify the legend that he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and not an ordinary human being, a fact that is extensively covered in Vishnu Puran 3.3.

⁴Shukdeo—Sage Shukdeo was the son of the legendary seer and renowned sage Veda Vyas. He was highly respected and was born of the celestial maiden named Ghrataachi when she had taken the form of a parrot, called Shuka in Sanskrit, to produce Shukdeo. He had his education under the expert guidance of his father Veda Vyas (refer Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-20, and the entire Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition). He was fortunate enough to have as his wise Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) the legendary king Janak, the father of Sita of the Ramayan fame and the most self-realised and enlightened king of his time (refer Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 28-77) and Lord Shiva himself (refer Shuk Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda which was preached by Lord Shiva to Shukdeo).

His self restraint was so profound that the celestial Apsara, the dancing damsel of the court of Indra, the king of Gods, failed to trap him in her honey-trap of lust and passions. Shukdeo learnt the epic Bhagvata Mahapurana from his father and then narrated it to Parikshit at the culmination of the Dwapar Yug (the third era of the four-era celestial cycle of mythology) and the beginning of the present era called Kali Yug. In an incident narrated in Maho-panishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 21-27 it is described how sage Shukdeo had to wait for twenty-one days before king Janak granted him an audience to test his self control over anger, ego and self-pride of being a son of an enlightened father of the stature of sage Veda Vyas as well as his sincerity and steadfastness of purpose which are important virtues that must be present in a student of spiritualism and important criterion by which his eligibility as a disciple can be judged.

The Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda describes him as a truly Brahm-realised sage along with sage Sankaadi in its Canto 1, verse no. 47.

Shukdeo learnt the epic Bhagvata Mahapurana from his father and then narrated it to Parikshit at the culmination of the Dwapar Yug (the third era of the four-era celestial cycle of Hindu mythology) and the beginning of the present era called Kali Yug (which is the last of the four-Yug cycle).

The Sharva Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 22 stresses the greatness of Lord Shiva known as Maheshwar by saying that even such great sage as Shukdeo

had praised and prayed to the Lord, implying that if Shukdeo had worshipped Shiva then the latter must surely be a great Lord.

⁵Narad—The celestial sage Narad is said to be a manifestation of the Supreme Being's Mana (mind and its thoughts, intentions, hopes, desires and wishes, as well as the heart and its emotions and sentiments). The Supreme Being implements his wishes and expresses his intentions and wishes by making Narad his spokesperson. Purans list uncountable instances when Narad has approached people—both the good and righteous as well as the demonic and unrighteous ones—to tell them the path best suited to them, and the wise ones treated this advice as the Lord's wish while the unwise ones still benefited from it because Narad's intention was always to turn a living being away from his sinful ways and lead him towards the good.

Since he is a personified Mana, he is as fickle, unstable and transient as the Mana—never staying at one place for more than a fleeting moment, always roaming here and there in the entire creation, having nothing to stop his path as he could go anywhere he wished. And the remarkable thing is that he was never unwelcome anywhere—even the demons welcomed him with the same respect as did the Gods.

It is believed that he is born in each Kalpa to carry out the wishes of the Supreme Being. [1 Kalpa is equivalent to 4.32 billion human years.] He was a Gandharva (a semi-God who is a celestial musician) named Upbarhan in the previous Kalpa. He was physically very charming and an expert musician. Once he showed his amorous intentions towards Urvashi, a celestial dancer, in the presence of Brahma the creator where he was supposed to show exemplary restraint, and this overt show of lust resulted in his being cursed by Brahma that he would become fallen and take birth in the mortal world as a Shudra (a low caste). So, he was born from a maid servant of low caste working as a devoted servant of a learned Brahmin. Under the constant companion of this great Brahmin, Narad developed noble and auspicious virtues in him even though he was a mere child of five years. He was very modest, devoted, pious, noble hearted and diligent.

Since he had the Lord's genes in him, his inclinations were more inclined towards the Spirit than the worldly charms of material sense objects which he detested from childhood. As luck would have it, once some wondering mendicants came to spend the four-month period of the rainy season in the hermitage of this Brahmin. Narad served them with great devotion. Impressed by his service and having some inner vision of his high spiritual stature and the spark of divinity that was lying hidden in him waiting for an opportune moment to leap up and shine through, they blessed him, taught him meditation and contemplation, besides initiating the child into the path of the Lord.

Thus, the dormant fire of renunciation and spiritual awareness was immediately ignited in Narad's little heart and he wished to take to Sanyas (a renunciate's life marked by constant wandering as a mendicant in search of the supreme bliss and Truth), but he did not wish to hurt his mother's emotions. But the Lord had other plans for him, and soon his wish was fulfilled when his loving mother died of snake bite while milking a cow. Instead of grieving at such a loss in human terms, the child Narad felt happy as if the last fetter was broken and he was liberated from worldly obligations.

He immediately headed north towards the mighty Himalaya Mountains to do severe Tapa (penance and austerity) to attain access to the Supreme Being. The little one walked on and on, and finally he was so tired and exhausted that when he saw a cool lake he drank water, ate fruits that he found there, and sat under the shadow of a tree and became lost in meditation. Lord Vishnu revealed himself in his four-arm form in his heart, but Narad was so thrilled and excited with this divine vision that he wished to see the Lord in practical terms with his physical eyes rather than the subtle eyes while he was in deep meditation. But as soon as he opened the eyes, the Lord vanished. Most sorry and overwhelmed with this loss, the child began to cry bitterly. Then a cosmic formless reverberating voice said—'Oh son! Your penance is

accepted, and I do love you. Though I bless you with an eternal life and that your memory of me would never be erased, but you would not be able to see me with physical eyes in this world. So go back to the world and carry out my divine mandate for me. Become my messenger and go preach the path of my devotion and holy name to this world so that other unfortunate creatures also can get liberation and deliverance from the fetters in which they have bound themselves with no one to show them an easy and practical way out of their predicaments. Go and preach my message to such people in every corner of the earth; go and preach my devotion and let them have faith in my holy name. Your salvation would come naturally and automatically to you as an unasked reward.'

Narad turned back with this divine mandate of the Lord to be carried out just like the great Apostles of Lord Jesus Christ had went, on the Lord's instructions, to spread his message to the people on this earth. Henceforth, he wandered in the entire creation like a mendicant, with an Indian lute upon which he sang the Lord's glories and his divine name, spreading the divine message of the Lord's mercy, compassion, benevolence and love everywhere, attempting to turn everyone towards the Lord and away from this sinful and mortal world so that each individual creature could get his spiritual liberation and deliverance. Such are the ways of great and holy saints that instead of being selfish to seek his own liberation and deliverance from the Lord as the grant of a boon and letting the rest of the world go to hell, Narad chose to sacrifice his own life, liberation and deliverance at the altar of larger good of creation and to fulfill the wish of the Lord. Of course there is another twist to this tale—the Lord does not select everyone to carry on his own divine agenda, and a soul who the Lord designates for this purpose is indeed the most favoured and lucky one—because the Emperor chooses only those upon whom he has utmost confidence to carry out his personal task. It is just like Jesus choosing his disciples and ordaining them the task of spreading his glorious Gospel of love and salvation.

Therefore, Narad, the apostle of the Supreme Being, is the most loved disciple of the Lord, and it is evidenced by the fact that he is the only saint who has unrestricted access to the abode of the Trinity Gods (Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation, Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder of this creation) besides every nook and corner of creation without hindrance and even without seeking any previous permission and appointment from anyone, be it a God or a Demon or anybody else. Narad's visit was always for the host's long term good, so he was always welcome and revered.

When the time came and the age of the physical body ended, he left the mortal coil like a serpent leaves its cuticle and went to heaven to sing the Lord's holy and divine name in the presence of Brahma, the old patriarch of creation. At the end of the Kalpa, at the time of Doomsday, he merged and became one with Brahma, the creator.

When the new cycle of creation came into being, he was born again from the Mana (mind) of Brahma the creator after the Sankadi sages were born. That is why, in the present Kalpa, Narad is called the 'Manas Putra' of Brahma, i.e. the son born out of Brahma's mental powers or his wishes. With this heritage and gene running in his blood, it is natural that he is highly respected and regarded as one of the greatest devotees of Lord Vishnu who is the Supreme Being personified. It is from the navel of Lord Vishnu that Brahma, the creator of the visible world, was born atop a divine Lotus that emerged from it while he was reclining on the bed made of the coiled body of the legendary serpent named Seshnath who floated on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk called Kshirsagar.

Narad preached renunciation of this material world and an extreme sense of faith in and complete devotion for Lord Hari (Narayan, Vishnu, the Supreme Being). But this was against the process of creation, because if everyone followed the path preached by Narad and renounced the material world then the process of propagation of the world and its inhabitant creatures along with its development would come to a

naught. So, when Narad preached renunciation and detachment from this material world of sense objects that was mortal, transient and never a giver of peace and happiness to the ten thousand mental sons who were created by Daksha Prajapati (the first male from whom the rest of the human race was born and who was assigned the task by Brahma to propagate creation) in order to propagate this human race, Narad obviously annoyed him. These sons were preached by Narad and they all became mendicants, renouncing their attachment with this life and all charms of the material world along with the desire to enjoy it, gratify their sense organs and remain entangled in affairs of this world. Daksha Prajapati was exasperated and he created another set of ten thousand sons. But when Narad again played spoil-sport, Daksha cursed him that Narad would have to remain on the move always and he would not be able to stay at one place for more than two 'Gharis'. [1 Ghari = 24 minutes. In practice the term means a very short period of time; a fleeting moment as small as batting an eyelid.] As a result of this curse, Narad became an ever-wandering mendicant. But this suited the divine mandate of the Lord—for now Narad was forced to keep on the move and reach newer corners of the worldly and celestial realm to preach the Lord's message amongst the mortal creatures on earth and the Gods and Spirits in the heaven.

It is believed that Narad is immortal and is symbolic of the stupendous powers of a man's mind. The mind is ever-wandering like Narad, and the subtle message in the entire lore is that one should tame this restless mind and train it to turn away from this mortal engrossing material world and instead turn towards the Lord for finding permanent liberation and deliverance from this world. A wise mind would teach (preach) the aspirant about the futility of pursuing this artificial world, and instead seek ways of finding the Truth that gives eternity and brings to an end the endless litany of miseries and horrors, perplexities and confusions, restlessness and agitations that are invariably associated with un-truth, delusions and ignorance.

Narad was the most erudite and scholarly devotee of the Lord. No other sage or saint could match him in his scholarly acumen and profundity of wisdom (ref. Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, section 1, verse no. 2). Narad is also credited with the composition of the great Sutra (formula or key) called 'Narad Bhakti Sutra' which defines the eclectic principles and characteristics of the spiritual practice called Bhakti which is to have a profound and exemplary degree of devotion for and surrender to the Supreme Being. Narad himself epitomizes Bhakti at its most refined and developed form.

In Atharva Veda's *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, sage Narad has taught an assembly of sages the grand philosophy as well as the eclectic tenets of Sanyas, the life of total renunciation, detachment and dispassion, leading to one's spiritual liberation and deliverance.

The Atharva Veda's *Hayagriva Upanishad* has been revealed to sage Narad by Brahma the creator when the sage approached the latter with his quest for Brahm-Vidya, the knowledge of Brahm.

In *Garud Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, the creator Brahma has taught Narad the esoteric knowledge known as the 'Garud Vidya' which describes the secret Mantras pertaining to Garud, the divine mount of Lord Vishnu, as well as the Mantras which can help to counter the evil effects of all types of poisons arising from snake bites.

It was sage Narad who had told Valmiki the story of the Lord Ram which the latter penned down in the form of the epic 'Ramayan' by sage Valmiki.

In Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', Lord Ram had explained to Narad why the Lord had not allowed him to marry in great detail. In essence the Lord told him that once he had taken the vows of renunciation and detachment to lead a life of a wandering hermit or friar, it would have been very wrong to marry. At the same time, the Lord has outlined the characteristic virtues of saints in the same discourse. Refer:

Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chanda line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 46.

⁶Lord Sesh-Nath—Lord Narayan or Vishnu is said to recline on the bedstead of ‘Sheshnath’, or the legendary serpent of thousand hoods, that floats on the calm waters of the Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk. Now, let us examine their symbolisms.

The word ‘Shesh’ means ‘leftover or remainder’, and ‘Nath’ means the Lord. At the time of conclusion of creation, ‘something’ remains from which the new creation would come into being. It is this ‘cosmic entity’ into which the previous creation collapses and dissolves at the time of its conclusion. It is from this ‘cosmic entity’, the ‘remainder’ of the last creation, that the first signs of the new creation would emerge. Hence, the Seshnath represents the cosmic entity that remains after the creation ends. He is the ‘Lord’ (Nath) of what remains of this creation. Since Lord Vishnu is the unquestioned ‘Lord and the Supreme Being’ of this creation who remains even after everything comes to an end, and it is from him that the next phase of creation emerges, he is depicted in the Purans and in iconography as being reclining on the Seshnath. Sheshnath also represents the sum total of all the souls in their subtle forms which have been leftovers from the previous generation or cycle of creation, hibernating and waiting for the opportune time to remerge as a new creation. It is believed that the world (earth) is supported on the hoods of Sheshnath.

In this context, the Kshirsagar, or the ocean of celestial milk called Amrit upon which this Sheshnath floats, is like the preservative ambrosial fluid which sustains life and gives it nourishment during the time it is in hibernating phase before the commencement of new creation or springing forth of a new generation of living organisms. The Kshirsagar also represents the cosmic primordial gel from which the creation was moulded by the Viraat Purush at the time of creation.

In ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ of sage Veda Vyas, Uttar Kand, Canto 8, verse nos. 25 it is narrated that “in the beginning of creation, the Brahm, the Supreme Being represented by the cosmic Consciousness, had employed his Maya (mystical powers that could produce something from nowhere) to create Seshnath, the celestial serpent with a thousand hoods that floated on the surface of the celestial ocean.

According to the epic story of Lord Ram, when Lord Vishnu had manifested himself as Lord Ram, Sheshnath had accompanied the Lord as his younger brother Laxman. Refer: Ram Charit Manas of Tulsidas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 197; Lanka Kand, Doha no. 54.]

(48)

हरति सब आरती आरती रामकी ।
 दहन दुख—दोष, निरमूलिनी कामकी ।।1।।
 सुरभ सौरभ धूप दीपबर मालिका ।
 उड़त अघ—बिहँग सुनि ताल करतालिका ।।2।।
 भक्त—हृदि—भवन, अग्यान—तम—हारिनी ।
 बिमल बिग्यानमय तेज—बिस्तारिनी ।।3।।
 मोह—मद—कोह—कलि—कंज—हिमजामिनी ।
 मुक्तिकी दूतिका, देह—दुति दामिनी ।।4।।
 प्रनत—जन—कुमुद—बन—इन्दु—कर—जालिका ।
 तुलसि अभिमान—महिषेस बहु कालिका ।।5।।

(48)

harati saba āratī āratī rāmakī.
 dahana dukha-dōṣa, niramūlinī kāmakī. 1.
 surabha saurabha dhūpa dīpabara mālikā.
 uṛata agha-bihamṅga suni tāla karatālikā. 2.
 bhakta-hṛdi-bhavana, agyāna-tama-hārinī.
 bimala bigyānamaya tēja-bistārinī. 3.
 mōha-mada-kōha-kali-kanja-himajāminī.
 muktikī dūtikā, dēha-duti dāminī. 4.
 pranata-jana-kumuda-bana-indu-kara-jālikā.
 tulasi abhimāna-mahiṣesa bahu kālikā. 5.

Verse no. 48— The ‘Aarti’ of Lord Ram (i.e. the ceremonial formal form of worship of Lord Ram as narrated in verse no. 47) removes all agonies, distresses, sufferings and pains. It burns (i.e. reduces to ashes) all sorrows and miseries, as well as all the sins and evils. It uproots and completely eliminates all sorts of worldly desires, wants, hopes and expectations. (1).

The symbolic garland consists of fragrant incense-sticks and the best of lighted lamps used for such worship (as described in verse no. 47). Hearing the clapping sound made during the Aarti, the birds represented by one’s sins, vices and evil deeds fly off immediately. (2).

The Aarti has the power and potent to illuminate the house of the devotee represented by his heart by destroying the darkness of ignorance and delusions. It spreads the brilliant light of truthful knowledge and wisdom in every direction. (3).

It is like a winter night for the purpose of destroying the lotuses representing Moha (worldly attachments, infatuations), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness), Krodh (anger), and Kali (all the dark evils and vices associated with the world). It is like a lady messenger of the goddess represented by spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. [In other words, the worship of Lord Ram as narrated in the foregoing verses is a harbinger for one’s spiritual liberation and deliverance. It heralds one’s emancipation and salvation.]

This messenger has a body as radiant and dazzling as lightening. [That is, it is very glorious and powerful. It shines and dazzles by its own illumination representing its stupendous spiritual potentials and divine glories. It is as effective as lightening.] (4).

It is like the moonlight that helps the Kumudini flower (a type of lotus; water lily) representing surrendered devotees to bloom and flourish. It is like the many ‘Kalikas’ (goddess of destruction and devastation) for the purpose of destroying the demon called Mahisasur representing the pride, ego and vanity of Tulsidas. [Mahisasur was the demon who was killed by goddess Durga.] (5).

Prayer offered to Hara (Lord Śiva) and Harī (Lord Viṣṇu)

(49)

देव—

दनुज—वन—दहन, गुन—गहन, गोविंद नंदादि—आनंद—दाताऽविनाशी ।
 शंभु, शिव, रुद्र, शंकर, भयंकर, भीम, घोर, तेजायतन, क्रोध—राशी ।।1।।
 अर्जुन, भगवंत, जगदंत—अंतक—त्रास—शमन, श्रीरमन, भुवनाभिरामं ।
 भूधराधीश जगदीश ईशान, विज्ञानघन, ज्ञान—कल्याण—धामं ।।2।।
 वामनाव्यक्त, पावन, परावर, विभो, प्रकट परमात्मा, प्रकृति—स्वामी ।
 चंद्रशेखर, शूलपाणि, हर, अनघ, अज, अमित, अविच्छिन्न, वृषभेश—गामी ।।3।।
 नील जलदाभतनु श्याम, बहु काम छवि राम राजीवलोचन कृपाला ।
 कंबु—कर्पूर—वपु, धवल, निर्मल, मौलि जटा, सुर—तटिनि, सित सुमन माला ।।4।।
 वसन किजल्कधर, चक्र—सारंग—दर—कंज—कौमोदकी अति विशाला ।
 मार—करि मत्त मृगराज, त्रैनैन, हर, नौमि अपहरण संसार—जाला ।।5।।
 कृष्ण, करुणाभवन, दवन कालीय खल, विपुल कंसादि निर्वशकारी ।
 त्रिपुर—मद—भंगकर, मत्तगज—चर्मधर, अन्धकोरग—ग्रसन पन्नगारी ।।6।।
 ब्रह्म, व्यापक, अकल, सकल, पर, परमहित, ग्यान, गोतीत गुण—वृत्ति—हर्ता ।
 सिंधुसुत—गर्व—गिरि—वज्र, गौरीश, भव, दक्ष—मख अखिल विध्वंसकर्ता ।।7।।
 भक्तिप्रिय, भक्तजन—कामधुक धेनु, हरि, हरण दुर्घट विकट विपत्ति भारी ।
 सुखद, नर्मद, वरद, विरज, अनवद्यऽखिल, विपिन—आनंद—वीथिन—विहारी ।।8।।
 रुचिर हरिशंकर नाम—मंत्रावली द्वन्द्वदुख हरनि, आनंदखानी ।
 विष्णु—शिव—लोक—सोपान—सम सर्वदा वदति तुलसीदास विशद बानी ।।9।।

(49)

dēva-

danuja-vana-dahana, guna-gahana, gōvinda nandādi-ānanda-dātā'vināśī.
 śambhu, śiva, rudra, śaṅkara, bhayaṅkara, bhīma, ghōra, tējāyatana, krōdha-
 rāśī. 1.

anamta, bhagavanta, jagadanta-antaka-trāsa-śamana, śrīramana,
 bhuvanābhirāmaṁ.

bhūgharādhiśa jagadīśa īśāna, vijñānaghana, jñāna-kalyāna-dhāmaṁ. 2.
 vāmanāvyakta, pāvana, parāvara, vibhō, prakāṣa paramātamā, prakṛti-svāmī.
 candraśekhara, śūlapāṇi, hara, anagha, aja, amita, avichinna, vṛṣabhēśa-
 gāmī. 3.

nīla jaladābhatanu śyāma, bahu kāma chavi rāma rājīvalōcana kṛpālā.
 kambu-karpūra-vapu, dhavala, nirmala, mauli jaṭā, sura-taṭini, sita sumana
 mālā. 4.

vasana kinjalkadhara, cakra-sāraṅga-dara-kaṇja-kaumōdakī ati viśālā.
 māra-kari matta mṛgarāja, trainaina, hara, naumi apaharaṇa sansāra-jālā. 5.
 kṛṣṇa, karuṇābhavana, davana kālīya khala, vipula kansādi nirvanśakārī.
 tripura-mada-bhaṅgakara, mattagaja-carmadhara, andhakōraga-grasana
 pannagārī. 6.

brahma, vyāpaka, akala, sakala, para, paramahita, gyāna, gōtita guṇa-vṛtti-
 hatrtā.

sindhusuta-garva-giri-vajra, gaurīśa, bhava, dakṣa-makha akhila
 vidhvanśakatrtā. 7.

bhaktipriya, bhaktajana-kāmadhuka dhēnu, hari, haraṇa durghaṭa vikaṭa vipatti bhārī.

sukhada, narmada, varada, viraja, anavadyakhila, vipina-ānanda-vīthina-vihārī. 8.

rucira hariśaṅkarī nāma-mantrāvalī dvandvadukha haraṇi, ānandakhānī. viṣṇu-śiva-lōka-sōpāna-sama sarvadā vadati tulasīdāsa viśada bānī. 9.

Verse no. 49—[Note: This is a unique form of prayer in as much as each of its stanzas has two parts, one dedicated to Lord Hari or Vishnu, and the other to Lord Har or Shiva. It is also known as ‘Hari-Shankar’ prayer precisely for this reason. Tulsidas has tried to establish the fact that both these two forms of the Lord are basically synonymous with and equivalent to each other. They are but the two aspects or sides of the same coin. This fact that there is no difference between Lords Vishnu and Shiva have been affirmed in the Upanishads as well—viz. (i) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition’s *Skanda Upanishad*, verse nos. 4, 8-9; and the entire *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad*. (ii) Atharva Veda tradition’s *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 6, verse nos. 8-9; *Sharav Upanishad*; and *Ram Rahasya Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 3.]

Lord Vishnu :- He is the destroyer of the forest representing demons. He is a forest (a rich and colourful garden; a treasury) of auspicious virtues and noble qualities. He is restrainer of the sense organs, gives happiness and joy to Nand and Upnand, and is indestructible and imperishable (i.e. eternal and immortal).

Lord Shiva :- He is renowned by the famous names of Shambhu, Shiva, Rudra, Shankar and other auspicious names. He is very fierce and formidable. He possesses great radiance and splendour. And he is an epitome of anger — Stanza 1.

Lord Vishnu :- He is without an end (i.e. is eternal, imperishable and infinite). He is empowered and endowed with the six types of Aishwaryas (fames, glories, qualities). [Refer verse no. 38.] He is the one who can terminate this world (existence). He is the remover of the torments caused (inflicted upon a creature) by Yam (the God of death and hell). He is the Lord of Laxmi (the goddess of wealth, prosperity and opulence). And he is a provider of happiness, cheer and joys to the whole world.

Lord Shiva :- He is the Lord of Mt. Kailash. He is the Lord of the universe. He is known as ‘Ishan’ (one of the eleven Rudras or forms of Lord Shiva). [The word ‘Ishan’ has its root in the word ‘Ish’ meaning a Lord.] He is a treasury or fount of knowledge and wisdom, and he is also an abode of enlightenment as well as the ultimate destination that is described as emancipation and salvation—Stanza 2.

Lord Vishnu :- He manifested in the form of Vaaman (the dwarf mendicant incarnation of Vishnu). He cannot be described by the mind and felt by the sense organs. He is pure, immaculate and untainted by any kind of impurities, vices and evils. He is the Lord of animate and inanimate world, as well as this mortal world and the immortal world beyond it. He is the ‘Parmatma’ himself (i.e. he is a manifestation of the supreme cosmic Soul; he is the macrocosmic, all-encompassing form of the supreme transcendental Brahm known as the Viraat Purush). And he is the Lord of Prakriti (Mother Nature).

Lord Shiva :- He bears the moon on his forehead and the trident in his hands. He is the annihilator of the entire creation. He is free from all sins. He is without birth and death (as he is eternal, imperishable and infinite). He is without divisions and separable parts (i.e. he is one whole and cannot be fractioned, partitioned or divided

into units; he cannot be destroyed or dismembered; he is immutable, whole and one infinite divine entity). And he mounts a Nandi (a bull) — Stanza 3.

Lord Vishnu :- He is of a dark complexion like the rain-bearing cloud. He is of a magnificent charm, beauty and glamour that is equivalent to countless Kamdeos taken together. His eyes are as beauteous and bewitchingly charming as the lotus flower. And he is the all-pervading, all-prevailing, all-encompassing and omnipresent Lord of the whole world.

Lord Shiva :- His body is like the conch-shell and camphor for its smoothness, fair complexion and a divine fragrance emanating from it. He is without faults and impurities (i.e. he is taintless and uncorrupt; he has no trace of evils, vices, blemishes etc. of any kind whatsoever). He has a crown of matted hairs which bears river Ganges on his head. And he is wearing a garland of white flowers —Stanza 4.

Lord Vishnu :- He wears a Pitambar (a body-wrapping silk cloth) which is yellow in colour like saffron. He holds in his hands a conch-shell, a discus, a lotus, a bow, an arrow, and a large water lily that resembles a mace.

Lord Shiva :- He is akin to a lion for the purpose of vanquishing wild and arrogant elephants representing Kamdeo (the God of passions and lust). He has three eyes. [The third eye is renowned as the ‘eye of wisdom and enlightenment’, and is located between the eyebrows above the nose.] He destroys or eliminates the entangling net of this world consisting of a web of birth and death. I bow my head to such a divine Lord Har (Shiva)— Stanza 5.

Lord Vishnu :- He attracts the attention of all creatures towards himself. He is an abode of mercy, compassion, kindness and graciousness. He is the vanquisher of the dangerous snake known as Kalia¹ represented by the present age known as Kaliyug. [Kalia was a venomous and ferocious dragon that was killed by Lord Krishna in his childhood days.] He had killed the entire clan of Kansha (the maternal uncle of Krishna, who was very cruel and tyrannical) along with other demonic forces. [This reference alludes to the incarnation of Lord Vishnu as Lord Krishna.]

Lord Shiva :- He crushed the haughtiness, pride, vanity and arrogance of the demon Triparasur. He wears the hide of wild elephants. He is like Garud (the legendary vehicle of Vishnu; the heavenly bird eagle or heron) for the purpose of gobbling up (destroying, conquering and eliminating) the serpents representing darkness (of ignorance, delusions, various worldly taints and entrapping temptations) that were represented by another demon known as Andhakaasur, the demon with the name Andhak²—Stanza 6.

Lord Vishnu :- He is the ‘Purna-Brahm’. [That is, he is a wholesome and complete manifestation of the transcendental Supreme Being known as Brahm.] As such, he is all-pervading, all-prevailing and omnipresent divine entity in the entire creation. He is, on the one hand, without any forms and attributes, is invisible, immutable and one uniform divine Being (‘Akal’), and on the other hand he has taken numerous gross visible forms exhibiting as many characteristics and varied attributes (‘Sakal’). He is the Supreme Being, the most exalted and the best amongst all entities in creation. He who is most concerned about the welfare and good of the subjects of this creation. He is an embodiment of wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity and truthful knowledge of the highest order and refinement. He is beyond the reach and grasp of any of the subtle instruments of perception and comprehension of the inner-self (i.e.

of the mind and the intellect), as well as any of the external instruments of the body such as its sense organs. He can remove (eliminate) the numerous Vasanas (inherent worldly tendencies), and the three Gunas (Satvik, Rajasic and Tamasic) that are an integral part of the inherent nature of all living beings in this creation.

Lord Shiva :- He is like a Vajra (an invincible and strong weapon of Indra, which is represented by the thunderbolt) for the purpose of cracking and demolishing the mountain of pride, vanity and haughtiness of demon Jalandhar. He is the beloved husband of goddess Parvati. He is the origin of the entire creation. He is one who had interrupted and destroyed the Yagya (fire sacrifice) performed by Daksha (who was the father of Parvati in her previous birth), as well as the Lord who can annihilate or bring to conclusion the entire creation (because Shiva is the third God of the Trinity responsible for bringing to an end of the cycle of creation initiated by Brahma, and it is essential to do so in accordance with the fundamental law of Nature that says that everything that has come into being must end one day)³—Stanza 7.

Lord Vishnu :- He loves nothing but devotion, and is like the Kamdhenu cow to fulfill all the desires of his devotees and remove their greatest of troubles and distresses, their gravest of concerns and sufferings. This is why he is renowned as ‘Hari’—i.e. one who robs or steals. In this case, the Lord is the one who forcibly takes away or snatches all the miseries and agonies that make his devotees suffer, and frees them the burden of having to bear with troubles and tribulations of any kind.

Lord Shiva :- He is the Lord who grants the boons of happiness and joys, of bliss, beatitude and felicity, and anything else that is desired by seekers. He is completely dispassionate, detached and full of renunciation. He is free from all taints, corruptions and impurities that are so characteristic of this existence. He roams in the lanes of Kashi (the city of Varanasi) which is like ‘Anand-Van’, i.e. a forest of happiness and bliss—Stanza 8.

These beautiful stanzas listing the different holy names (and glories) of Lords Hari (Vishnu) and Shankar (Shiva) are collectively called ‘Hari-Shankari’. They can remove the perplexities, bewilderments, tribulations, miseries and consternations caused by worldly faults such as Raag and Dwesh (attachments and infatuations on the one hand, and malice, ill-will and hatred on the other hand). They are a mine of bliss, ecstasy, happiness and joys. They are like a ladder to climb to the abode of Vishnu and Shiva (i.e. reach heaven). Tulsidas asserts all this affirmatively, articulately, with a firm conviction and a steady voice which is well-thought and free from any corrupting influences of this world—Stanza 9.

[Note—¹The serpent Kaliya (davana kāliya khala): According to Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurana, a ferocious serpent called Kaliya lived in the waters of river Yamuna. Due to the heat of its venom, the water was on the boil constantly. Sri Krishna pierced its fangs and leashed it. Thereafter, the serpent left the river and went to the ocean (perhaps this is one of the reasons why the ocean water is so un-potable).

²The demon Andhak (andhakōraga-grasana): Andhak was a tyrannical, strong and riotous demon, and was the son of Hiranyaaksha. Propitiating Brahma he got the boon that he would live as long as he does not get wisdom and enlightenment. Such an incongruously odd boon! Bolstered by the sense of immortality, he became belicose, threatening and tormenting the Gods who ran like hunted fox. At last, they invoked Shiva to intercede and protect them. Shiva fought a ferocious battle with Andhak. Finally, he struck the latter with a trident (symbolic of wisdom), as a result of which, the demon entered into a trance like state of meditation. Pleased at his

posture, the merciful Lord Shiva gave him the boon of eternal and abiding devotion. The story appears in Shiva Puran.

³The destruction of the fire-sacrifice of Prajapati Daksha (dakṣa-makha akhila vidhvāṣakatrtā): In her previous birth, Shiva's consort Parvati was known as Sati. Sati's father Daksha Prajapati performed a fire-sacrifice but did not invite Shiva, his son-in-law. This infuriated Sati because she took it as a public insult of her husband. She was very angry and disgusted, and therefore had burnt herself by a self-kindled fire of Yoga. Shiva, on getting the news, sent Virbhadrā who went and disrupted the sacrifice to punish Daksha. This episode has been narrated by Tulsidas in his epic story of Lord Ram, called the Ram Charit Manas, in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 60—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 65.

The word 'Akhla' is significant here. It means 'all'. 'All' has two connotations: one refers to the destruction of the entire sacrifice of Daksha, and the other interpretation is that Shiva is the Lord who brings to an end the entire creation as the 'supreme Concluder' of creation. It ought to be noted that the Supreme Being known as 'Brahm' had assumed three distinct forms when he created this creation. As its 'creator' he became 'Brahma', as its 'sustainer' he became 'Vishnu', and as its 'concluder' he became 'Rudra' which is one of the many name of Shiva.]

Glory to Lord Rāma

(50)

देव—

भानुकुल—कमल—रवि, कोटि कंदर्प—छवि, काल—कलि—व्यालमिव वैनतेयं ।
 प्रबल भुजदंड परचंड कोदंड—धर तूणवर विशिख बलमप्रमेयं ॥1॥
 अरुण राजीवदल—नयन, सुषमा—अयन, श्याम तन—कांति वर वारिदाभं ।
 तप्त कांचन—वस्त्र, शस्त्र—विद्या—निपुण, सिद्ध—सुर—सेव्य, पाथोजनाभं ॥2॥
 अखिल लावण्य—गृह, विश्व—विग्रह, परम प्रौढ़, गुणगूढ, महिमा उदारं ।
 दुर्घर्ष, दुस्तर, दुर्ग, स्वर्ग—अपवर्ग—पति, भग्न संसार—पादप—कुठारं ॥3॥
 शापवश मुनिवधू—मुक्तकृत, विप्रहित, यज्ञ—रक्षण—दक्ष, पक्षकर्ता ।
 जनक—नृप—सदसि शिवचाप—भंजन, उग्र भार्गवागर्व—गरिमापहर्ता ॥4॥
 गुरु—गिरा—गौरवामर—सुदुस्त्यज राज्य त्यक्त, श्रीसहित सौमित्रि—भ्राता ।
 संग जनकात्मजा, मनुजमनुसृत्य अज, दुष्ट—वध—निरत, त्रैलोक्यत्राता ॥5॥
 दंडकारण्य कृतपुण्य पावन चरण, हरण मारीच—मायाकुरंगं ।
 बालि बलमत्त गजराज इव केसरी, सुहृद—सुग्रीव—दुख—राशि—भंगं ॥6॥
 ऋक्ष, मर्कट विकट सुभट उद्भट समर, शैल—संकाशरिपु त्रासकारी ।
 बद्धपाथोधि, सुर—निकर—मोचन, सकुल दलन दससीस—भुजबीस भारी ॥7॥
 दुष्ट बिबुधारि—संघात, अपहरण महि—भार, अवतार कारण अनूपं ।
 अमल, अनवद्य, अद्वैत, निर्गुण, सगुण, ब्रह्म सुमिरामि नरभूप—रूपं ॥8॥
 शेष—श्रुति—शारदा—शंभु—नारद—सनक गनत गुन अंत नहिं तव चरित्रं ।
 सोइ राम कामारि—प्रिय अवधपति सर्वदा दासतुलसी—त्रास—निधि—वहित्रं ॥9॥

(50)

dēva-

bhānukula-kamala-ravi, kōṭi kandarpa-chavi, kāla-kali-vyālamiva vainatēyaṁ.
 prabala bhujaḍaṇḍa paracaṇḍa kōḍaṇḍa-dhara tūṇavara viśikha

balamapramēyaṁ. 1.

aruṇa rājīvadala-nayana, suṣamā-ayana, śyāma tana-kānti vara vāridābhaṁ.
tapta kāñcana-vastra, śastra-vidyā-nipuṇa, sid'dha-sura-sēvya,
pāthōjanābhaṁ. 2.

akhila lāvaṇya-gr̥ha, viśva-vigraha, parama prauṛha, guṇagūṛha, mahimā
udāraṁ.

durgharṣa, dustara, durga, svarga-apavarga-pati, bhagna sansāra-pādapa-
kuṭhāraṁ. 3.

śāpavaśa munivadhū-muktakṛta, viprahita, yajña-rakṣaṇa-dakṣa, pakṣakartā.
janaka-nṛpa-sadasī śivacāpa-bhañjana, ugra bhārgavāgarva-garimāpahartā. 4.
guru-girā-gauravāmara-sudustyaaja rājya tyakta, śrīsaḥita saumitri-bhrātā.
saṅga janakātmajā, manujamanuṣṛtya aja, duṣṭa-vadha-nirata, trailōkyatrātā.

5.

daṇḍakāraṇya kṛtapuṇya pāvana caraṇa, haraṇa mārīca-māyākuraṅgaṁ.
bāli balamatta gajarāja iva kēsari, suhṛda-sugrīva-dukha-rāśi-bhaṅgaṁ. 6.
ṛkṣa, markata vikaṭa subhaṭa udbhaṭa samara, śaila-saṅkāśa ripu trāsakārī.
bad'dhapāthōdhi, sura-nikara-mōcana, sakula dalana dasasīsa-bhujabīsa
bhārī. 7.

duṣṭa bibudhāri-saṅghāta, apaharaṇa mahi-bhāra, avatāra kāraṇa anūpaṁ.
amala, anavadya, advaita, nirguṇa, saguṇa, brahma sumirāmi narabhūpa-
rūpaṁ. 8.

śēṣa-śruti-śāradā-śambhu-nārada-sanaka ganata guna anta nahim tava
caritraṁ.

sō'i rāma kāmāri-priya avadhapati sarvadā dāsātulasī-trāsa-nidhi-vahitraṁ. 9.

Verse no. 50— Lord Ram is like the sun for making the lotus of the Sun-race to bloom¹. He has beauty and glamour like millions of Kamdeos taken together. He is like Garuda (the heavenly eagle or heron who is a vehicle of Vishnu) to gobble-up the serpents in the form of Kaliyug. He is holding a mighty and powerful bow and arrow in his strong arms, and bears a quiver (tied around his waist). His valour and strength are measureless (i.e. unmatched and stupendous). (1).

His eyes are red like the petals of the red-coloured lotus flower. He is a treasury of splendour, radiance, beauty, charm, magnificence, grandeur and goodness of all kind. The beautiful radiant glow of his dark complexioned body is akin to the dark rain-bearing clouds. He is clad in Pitambar which is yellow-coloured like heated gold. He is an expert in weaponry and art of warfare. [That is, he is an expert and skilled warrior.]

He is worshipped (venerated, adored) by mystics and Gods alike. And the celestial Lotus (atop which the creator was born) had emerged from his navel. [This refers to the cosmic form of Vishnu known as the Viraat Purush. While the Lord was reclining on the bedstead of the serpent Shesh-Nath that floated on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as Kshir Sagar, a lotus had emerged from his navel. The creator Brahma was seated on its petals.] (2).

He is the abode or treasury of all beauty and charms in existence. The whole world (creation) is his image; it is the Lord who has revealed himself in the form of this creation. He is very qualified, highly acclaimed and full of mysterious (unknown or beyond comprehension) qualities and virtues. His fame and glory are measureless and

fathomless. He is invincible. His activities are beyond understanding by anyone. It is very difficult to understand (or recognise) him and his true form. He is the Lord of heaven and salvation. And he is equivalent to an axe for the purpose of cutting out entirely from its root or foundation (or uprooting and completely eliminating) this mortal world consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death. [That is, Lord Ram is the one who can provide liberation and deliverance to the soul from the fetters that shackle the creature to this mundane existence of transmigration.] (3).

He had liberated Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, from the curse (that had transformed her into a stone). He was very careful, agile and diligent in protecting the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra (from being defiled by the demons). He always favours his devotees, dependants and followers. And he had vanquished (removed) the famed pride, vanity and arrogance of the haughty sage named Bhargav (i.e. sage Parashuram) by breaking Lord Shiva's bow in the assembly of king Janak. [This refers to the marriage ceremony of Lord Ram and Sita wherein Parashuram had intervened because he was annoyed at the breaking of Lord Shiva's bow as he had regarded this incident as an insult of Shiva. Later on, however, he was subdued by Lord Ram, and had surrendered to the Lord in humiliation.] (4).

In order to keep the honour of the words of his father, he, accompanied by Saumitra (his brother Laxman) and Sri (Sita, Lord Ram's divine consort), had willingly renounced the kingdom (of Ayodhya) which even the gods would find difficult to forego (because of its richness, wealth, opulence, magnificence, fame and grandeur). Thereafter, he was accompanied by brother Laxman and wife Sita in engaging himself in maverick worldly activities that culminated in the killing of the cruel demons including Ravana with the express purpose of affording protection to the three worlds (i.e. the entire creation that was being tyrannized by the demons), in spite of the fact that the Lord is without any birth and the supreme transcendental Brahm himself personified. (5).

He had sanctified the (cursed) Dandak forest by his holy feet. He had eliminated (killed) the deceitful and crooked demon named Marich who was disguised as a deer. He was like a lion for the purpose of slaying Bali who was like a mad, wild and arrogant elephant. He is the remover of all sorrows and miseries of Sugriv (the monkey king). And he is the one who eliminates all kinds of sufferings, sorrows, miseries, grief, agonies, troubles and tribulations of all the creatures who seek his refuge and shelter, and for whom he is the Lord who is most benevolent, dear, kind and graceful. (6).

Accompanied by fierce, very brave and valiant monkeys and bears, he frightened colossus demon warriors—who were all huge like Kumbhkaran—in the battle-field. He had bridged the formidable ocean, had liberated the hordes of Gods who were held captive by Ravana, and had destroyed the 10-headed and 20-armed strong Ravana along with his entire clan of demons. (7).

I remember (worship, venerate and adore) Lord Ram who is a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm as a human being for the purpose of removing the burden of the world by killing the hordes of cruel, evil and wicked demons who were highly inimical to the Gods, who is without any attributes and gross forms, who is unparalleled and without any comparison, who is absolutely immaculate and pristine

pure, who is faultless and untainted, who is non-dual and one single whole, who is primarily invisible, without any forms and qualities, but who has willingly assumed a visible, gross form with characteristics by the virtue of his voluntary association with Maya (delusions), and who is the Emperor and King of Kings. (8).

Lord Ram—whose stupendous fame, astounding glories, eclectic virtues and noble qualities are being constantly sung by Sesh-Nath (the legendary serpent), the Vedas (the holy scriptures), Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge, wisdom and speech), Shiva (the third of the Trinity Gods and the concluder of creation), the celestial sages Narad and Sankadi etc., but who are unable to describe them—is the same Lord who is very dear to Lord Shiva and is the king of Ayodhya. He is also the Lord who is like a ship to ferry Tulsidas across the ocean of sorrows, distress, miseries and agonies in which he finds himself trapped. (9).

[Note—¹The lotus flower opens its petals when the sun rises. Hence, this metaphor is used to imply that Lord Ram has established the glory of the Sun-race in which he was born. There were many great kings in this race, but it would not have got the fame and acclaim that it did without the birth of Lord Ram in it.]

(51)

देव—

जानकीनाथ, रघुनाथ, रागादि—तम—तरणि, तारुण्यतनु, तेजधामं ।
 सच्चिदानंद, आनंदकंदाकरं, विश्व—विश्राम, रामाभिरामं ॥1॥
 नीलनव—वारिधर—सुभग—सुभकांति, कटि पीत कौशेयवर वसनधारी ।
 रत्न—हाटक—जटित—मुकुट—मंडित—मौलि, भानु—शत—सदृश उद्योतकारी ॥2॥
 श्रवण कुंडल, भाल तिलक, भ्रू रुचिर अति, अरुण अंभोज लोचन विशालं ।
 वक्र अवलोक, त्रैलोक शोकापहं, मार—रिपु—हृदय—मानस—मरालं ॥3॥
 नासिका चारु, सुकपोल, द्विज वज्रदुति, अधर बिंबोपमा, मधुरहासं ।
 कंठदर, चिबुक वर, वचन गंभीरतर, सत्य—संकल्प, सुरत्रास—नासं ॥4॥
 सुमन सुविचित्र नव तुलसिकादल—युतं मृदुल वनमाल उर भ्राजमानं ।
 भ्रमत आमोदवश मत्त मधुकर—निकर, मधुरतर मुखर कुर्वन्ति गानं ॥5॥
 सुभग श्रीवत्स, केयूर, कंकण, हार, किंकिणी—रटनि कटि—तट रसालं ।
 वाम दिसि जनकजासीन—सिंहासनं कनक—मृदुवल्लिवत तरु तमालं ॥6॥
 आजानु भुजदंड, कोदंड—मंडित वाम बाहु, दक्षिण पाणि बाणमेकं ।
 अखिल मुनि—निकर, सुर, सिद्ध, गंधर्व वर नमत नर नाग अवनिप अनेकं ॥7॥
 अनघ, अविच्छिन्न, सर्वज्ञ, सर्वेश, खलु सर्वतोभद्र—दाताऽसमाकं ।
 प्रणतजन—खेद—विच्छेद—विद्या—निपुण नौमि श्रीराम सौमित्रिसाकं ॥8॥
 युगल पदपद्म सुखसन्धपद्मालयं, चिन्ह कुलिशादि शोभाति भारी ।
 हनुमंत—हृदि विमल कृत परममंदिर, सदा दासतुलसी—शरण शोकहारी ॥9॥

(51)

dēva-

jānakīnātha, raghunātha, rāgādi-tama-taraṇi, tāruṇyatanu, tējadhāmaṁ.

saccidānanda, ānandakandākaraṁ, viśva-viśrāma, rāmābhirāmaṁ. 1.
 nīlanava-vāridhara-subhaga-subhakānti, kaṭi pīta kauśēya vara vasanadhārī.
 ratna-hāṭaka-jaṭita-mukuṭa-maṇḍita-mauli, bhānu-śata-saḍṣa udyōtakārī. 2.
 śravaṇa kuṇḍala, bhāla tilaka, bhrū rucira ati, aruṇa ambhōja lōcana viśālaṁ.
 vakra avalōka, trailōka śōkāpahaṁ, māra-ripu-hṛdaya-mānasa-marālaṁ. 3.
 nāsikā cāru, sukapōla, dvija vajraduti, adhara bimbōpamā, madhurahāsaṁ.
 kaṇṭhadara, cibuka vara, vacana gambhīratara, satya-saṅkalpa, suratrāsa-
 nāsaṁ. 4.
 sumana suvicitra nava tulasikādala-yutaṁ mṛdula vanamāla ura
 bhrājamānaṁ.
 bhramata āmōdavaśa matta madhukara-nikara, madhuratara mukhara
 kurvanti gānaṁ. 5.
 subhaga śrīvatsa, kēyūra, kaṅkaṇa, hāra, kiṅkiṇī-raṭani kaṭi-taṭa rasālaṁ.
 vāma diśi janakajāsīna-sinhāsaṇaṁ kanaka-mṛduvallivata taru tamālaṁ. 6.
 ājānu bhujadaṇḍa, kōdaṇḍa-maṇḍita vāma bāhu, dakṣiṇa pāṇi bāṇamēkaṁ.
 akhila muni-nikara, sura, sid'dha, gandharva vara namata nara nāga avanipa
 anēkaṁ. 7.
 anagha, avichinna, sarvajña, sarvēśa, khalu sarvatōbhadra-dātāśamākaṁ.
 praṇatajana-khēda-vicchēda-vidyā-nipuṇa naumi śrīrāma saumitrisākaṁ. 8.
 yugala padapaṇi sukhasaṇḍipāṇīlayaṁ, cinha kuliśādi śōbhāti bhārī.
 hanumanta-hṛdi vimala kṛta paramamandira, sadā dāsatulasī-śaraṇa
 śōkahārī. 9.

Verse no. 51—Lord Raghunath (literally the Lord of the Raghu dynasty; here meaning Lord Ram), who is the beloved husband of Sita, is like the sun for the purposing of destroying the darkness represented by the negative qualities of Raag and Dwesh (attachments and infatuations on the one hand, and envy, jealousy and discord on the other hand respectively). He has a youthful body. He is a treasury of radiance, glory, energy, dynamism and splendour. He is an embodiment of the virtues of Sat (truth), Chit (consciousness) and Anand (bliss, beatitude and felicity). He is indeed a mind of extreme bliss, cheerfulness, happiness and joyousness. He bestows or grants the boon of peace and tranquility to the world. He is very beautiful in this aspect (here meaning very charitable in bountifully providing all these blessings to the people of the world, specially his devotees). (1).

The radiance of his countenance and form is as beautiful and auspicious as that of fresh rain-bearing dark clouds. He wears a silk Pitambar (silk cloth) around his waist. He is adorned by a golden crown which is studded with gems, and which is as magnificent and splendid as hundreds of suns shining simultaneously. (2).

He wears ear-rings and has a Tilak mark (a religious sign) marked on his forehead. His eye-brows are very attractive and charming. His eyes are large like a red lotus, with which he glances obliquely (i.e. attractively, enchantingly, bewitchingly and fascinatingly). He is like a Swan in the lake of Lord Shiva's heart who had slayed Kamdeo (the God of passion and lust). And he removes the sorrows, miseries and distresses of the three Lokas (i.e. the entire creation). (3).

His nose is beautiful (attractive and well-formed, as if chiseled), his cheeks are attractive and glowing, his teeth glitter and glisten like diamonds, his lips are red like

the fruits of beetle, his smile is sweet and enchanting, his throat is like a conch-shell, and his chin is also very attractive. His words are very wise, meaningful and serious (i.e. he does not speak unnecessarily and useless things). He is true to his words and vows. And he is the destroyer of the sorrows, miseries, torments, tribulations and distresses of all kinds for the Gods. (4).

His chest is adorned by a soft garland of multi-coloured flowers and newly plucked leaves of Tulsi (basil plant). Groups of bumble-bees are attracted towards the garland due to the fragrance of its flowers, and hum around it. (5).

His chest has a beautiful mark of 'Srivatsa' imprinted on it. [The Srivatsa is the footprint of sage Brighu who was once so annoyed that he had kicked Lord Vishnu on his chest. The Lord is so forgiving and loving that instead of casting his wrath on Bhrigu he had accepted it as mark of the sage's fearlessness and confidence of devotion in the Lord as well as his sense of closeness to him that he promised to bear it for ever.] His arms have arm-bands, and wrists have bracelets. An attractive garland adorns his neck, and a beautiful 'Taagri' around his waist. [The Taagri is an ornament that is worn around the waist, and it has tiny bells that jingle when the wearer moves.]

Sita is seated to his left on the throne, and she appears adorable like a golden creeper near the magnificent Tamaal tree (the black catechu tree). [Here, Sita is compared to the golden-coloured creeper, and Lord Ram to the black catechu tree around which this creeper is twined.] (6).

His arms stretch up to the knees. He holds a bow in his left arm and an arrow in his right arm. He is shown respect by all the sages, seers, hermits etc., the Gods, the Siddhas (mystics), the best of Gandharvas (celestial musicians), the humans, the serpents and numerous kings and emperors who bow their heads before him. (7).

He is without sins and faults. He is immutable, indivisible, constant, seamless and eternal. He is all-knowing, all-wise and omniscient. He is the Lord of all. He is the one who certainly looks after the welfare and well-being of his devotees, followers, dependants, subjects and subordinates. He is fully able, competent and expert in the art of removing the sorrows and miseries of those who have taken his refuge and shelter.

I (Tulsidas) bow my head most reverentially before such a Lord Ram who is accompanied by Laxman (his brother). (8).

His two holy and august feet are the abode of bliss and happiness, as well as of Kamla (Laxmi). [Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, serves his feet. The Lord's holy feet are the providers of all happiness and joy in this world.]

These feet of the Lord are adorned by the mark of Vajra (the invincible weapon of Indra) and forty-eight other marks of holiness and divinity. These feet are enshrined in the temple represented by the pure and holy subtle heart of Hanuman who is the greatest devotee of the Lord. [That is, Hanuman always these holy feet of Lord Ram and has enshrined them in his heart like a deity is consecrated in a temple.]

Tulsidas says that he has surrendered himself (i.e. has taken refuge and shelter) in the holy august feet of such a Lord Ram who is an eliminator or remover of all his (Tulsidas') sorrows, miseries, pains, griefs, distresses, torments, troubles, tribulations and ordeals of all kinds. (9).

Different Incarnations of the Lord

(52)

देव—

कोशलाधीश, जगदीश, जगदेकहित, अमितगुण, विपुल विस्तार लीला ।
 गायति तव चरितसुपवित्र श्रुति शेष शुक शंभु सनकादि मुनि मननशीला ॥1॥
 वारिचर—वपुष धरि भक्त—निस्तारपर, धरणि कृत नाव महिमातिगुर्वी ।
 सकल यज्ञांशमय उग्र विग्रह क्रोड़, मर्दि दनुजेश उद्धरण उर्वी ॥2॥
 कमठ अति विकट तनु कठिन पृष्ठोपरी, भ्रमत मंदर कंडु—सुख मुरारी ।
 प्रकटकृत अमृत, गो, इंदिरा, इंदु, वृंदारकावृंद—आनंदकारी ॥3॥
 मनुज—मुनि—सिद्ध—सुर—नाग—त्रासक, दुष्ट दनुज द्विज—धर्म—मरजाद—हर्ता ।
 अतुल मृगराज—वपुधरित, विहरित अरि, भक्त प्रह्लाद—अहलाद—कर्ता ॥4॥
 छलन बलि कपट—वटुरूप वामन ब्रह्म, भुवन पर्यंत पद तीन करणं ।
 चरण—नख—नीर त्रैलोक—पावन परम, विबुध—जननी—दुसह—शोक हरणं ॥5॥
 क्षत्रियाधीश—करि निकर नव—केसरी, परशुधर विप्र—ससि—जलदरूपं ।
 बीस भुजदंड दससीस खंडन चंड वेग सायक नौमि राम भूपं ॥6॥
 भूमिभर—भार—हर, प्रकट परमात्मा, ब्रह्म नररूपधर भक्तहेतू ।
 वृष्णि—कुल—कुमुद—राकेश राधारमण, कंस—बंसाटवी—धूमकेतू ॥7॥
 प्रबल पाखंड महि—मंडलाकुल देखि, निंद्यकृत अखिल मख कर्म—जालं ।
 शुद्ध बोधैकधन, ज्ञान—गुणधाम, अज, बौद्ध—अवतार वंदे कृपालं ॥8॥
 कालकलिजनित—मल—मलिनमन सर्वनर मोह—निशि—निबिड़यवनांधकारं ।
 विष्णुयश पुत्र कलकी दिवाकर उदित दासतुलसी हरण विपतिभारं ॥9॥

(52)

dēva-

kōśalādhīśa, jagadīśa, jagadēkahita, amitagaṇa, vipula vistāra līlā.
 gāyanti tava caritasupavitra śruti śēṣa śuka śambhu sanakādi muni
 mananaśīlā. 1.

vāricara-vapuṣa dhari bhakta-nistārapara, dharaṇīkṛta nāva mahimātigurvī.
 sakala yajñānśamaya ugra vighraha krōṇa, mardī danujēśa ud'dharaṇa urvī. 2.
 kamaṭha ati vikaṭa tanu kaṭhina prṣṭhōparī, bhramata mandara kaṇḍu-sukha
 murārī.

prakaṭakṛta amṛta, gō, indirā, indu, vṛndārakāvṛnda-ānandakārī. 3.
 manuja-muni-sid'dha-sura-nāga-trāsaka, duṣṭa danuja dvija-dharma-
 marajāda-hatrtā.

atula mrgarāja-vapudharita, viddarita ari, bhakta prahalāda-ahalāda-katrtā. 4.
 chalana bali kapaṭa-vaṭurūpa vāmana brahma, bhuvana paryanta pada tīna
 karaṇam.

caraṇa-nakha-nīra trailōka-pāvana parama, vibudha-janani-dusaha-śōka
 haraṇam. 5.

kṣatriyādhīśa-kari nikara nava-kēsārī, paraśudhara vipra-sasi-jaladarūpaṁ.
 bīsa bhujaḍaṇḍa dasasīsa khaṇḍana caṇḍa vēga sāyaka naumi rāma bhūpaṁ.
 6.

bhūmibhara-bhāra-hara, prakāṣa paramātamā, brahma nararūpadhara
bhaktahētū.

vr̥ṣṇi-kula-kumuda-rākēśa rādhāramaṇa, kansa-bansāṭavī-dhūmakētū. 7.
prabala pākhaṇḍa mahi-maṇḍalākula dēkhi, nindyakṛta akhila makha karma-
jālaṁ.

śud'dha bōdhaikaghana, jñāna-guṇadhāma, aja, baud'dha-avatāra vandē
kṛpālaṁ. 8.

kālakalijanita-mala-malinamana sarvanara mōha-niśi-nibirayavanāndhakāraṁ.
viṣṇuyaśa putra kalakī divākara udita dāsatalasī haraṇa vipatibhāraṁ. 9.

Verse no. 52— Oh the king of Kaushal (Ayodhya)! Oh the Lord of the world (i.e. Lord Ram)! You are the only benefactor of the world, and the only one who cares for its good, well-being and welfare. Your measureless and countless qualities and virtues have spread widely everywhere (i.e. are known everywhere). The four Vedas, the Sesh-Nath, sages Shukdeo and Sankadi along with and other wise and thoughtful sages and saints, as well as Lord Shiva—all sing laurels of your glorious virtues and holy characters. (1).

You had assumed the form of a huge Fish (known as the Matsya) and made the earth a boat to take (pull or tug or row) to safety your devotees and followers during the great dooms-day deluge. Your divine glories are immeasurable and astounding. You are a complete embodiment of all the aspects of the Yagyas (fire sacrifices, sanctified rituals, etc.). You had liberated the earth from the clutches of the demon Hiranyaaksha who had a colossus body by slaying him in your divine incarnation as a Boar (known as the 'Varaaha'). (2).

Oh Murari! At the time of the legendary churning of the ocean (by the demons and Gods in search of nectar of life or the elixir called Amrit), you had taken the form of the great tortoise (the 'Kaschap'; the turtle) and had borne the weight of the Mandraachal mountain on your back, thereby preventing it from sinking into the ocean bed, and the friction caused by its rotation was like a mere itch on your back. As a result of the churning, you had caused to be produced the Amrit (elixir of eternal life), the Kamdhenu cow (the all wish-fulfilling cow of Gods), Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity), and the Moon—all of which gave a lot of joy to the Gods. (3).

By taking the form of the most ferocious and strong form of Lord 'Nrsingh' (literally one who was half man and half lion), you had torn apart the evil demon Hiranyakashipu who was tormenting humans, hermits, mystics, Gods and serpents (i.e. all creatures), was destroying and transgressing the sanctity of the laws of Dharma (laws of auspicious and righteous conduct), and tyrannizing the Brahmins (who were the guardians of Dharma). This great act of protection and redemption done by you had made the most exalted devotee named Prahalad overwhelmed with emotions, happiness and joys. [Briefly, Prahalad, who was the son of the demon Hiranyakashipu, was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. His father did not approve of it, and since the son would not stop worshipping the Lord, the demon began torturing Prahalad. Finally one day, the demon drew a sword to kill his son and challenged him to reveal his Lord from the pillar of the palace if ever he was in existence. It was then that Lord Vishnu manifested as Nrsingh to kill this demon. Vishnu had to assume this unconventional form because of boon granted to the demon that he would neither be

killed by a human or an animal. So the Lord took the middle path of becoming a half man and a half lion.] (4).

Taking the form of a Brahmin dwarf mendicant known as 'Vaaman', you had asked the demon king Bali (Lord of the nether-world) for land that can be measured by your three steps, and having him promise it to you, you had measured the entire universe in those three steps. At the time (of measurement), the holy water (i.e. river Ganges) had emerged from your toe-nails. Having thus banished Bali to the subterranean world, you had returned (restored) the Lordship of the celestial and terrestrial worlds to Indra, and had thereby removed the cause of sorrow of Aditi, the mother of Gods. (5).

You had manifested yourself in the form of Parashuram who was like a lion for the purpose of crushing the herd of elephants represented by haughty and arrogant Sahastrabahu and other Khastriya kings. You are like a rain-bearing cloud that nourishes the crop representing Brahmins. [That is, you sustain and protect Brahmins.]

Similarly, as Lord Ram you had reduced to crushed (killed) the demon named Ravana, who had ten heads and twenty arms, with your fierce and powerful arrows. I bow my head reverentially before such a Lord Ram who is the Emperor of kings. (6).

In spite of you being the absolute supreme transcendental Brahman who has no forms and attributes, you had still assumed the form of human being in order to please your devotees and for removing the great burden represented by evil demons from this earth. You are equivalent to the full moon which helped the lily flower representing the Vrishni-race to blossom and flourish. In this respect, you were the beloved consort of Radha, and were like a terrible fire to destroy the forest representing the clan of king Kansha and his kith and kin. [Tulsidas is referring to Lord Krishna in this stanza.] (7).

In order to liberate the earth from the entrapping net of blind, meaningless and false doctrines compounded by heresies, irrelevant practices, obsolete beliefs and obscure rituals that accompanied formal forms of worship such as elaborate fire sacrifices and other rituals and practices (as perpetrated by the Brahmins on the pretext of religion and salvation), you had manifested yourself as Lord Buddha. I bow my head in reverence to your divine form as Lord Buddha who had purity of wisdom, who was an embodiment of high enlightenment, who was extremely self-realised, who was endowed with all the magnificent and glorious virtues and characters one can think of, who was without a birth as he was eternal, and who was most merciful, kind, graceful and compassionate. (8).

The mind, intellect, sub-conscious and heart of all the people have been darkened, corrupted and maligned by the evil effects of sins and vices in the present age of Kaliyug. You will manifest yourself as a Kalki-Avatar (literally an incarnation in Kaliyug) in the form of a son in the household of a Brahmin named Vishnu Yash. This manifestation would be like a sun to remove the pitch darkness represented by Mlechas (literally meaning the impure-ones) in the night represented by Moha (worldly attachments, delusions and ignorance).

Oh Lord! Remove the burden of countless troubles and tribulations, the many problems and ordeals that are faced and suffered by Tulsidas. (9).

[Note—Now let us read more about the different incarnations of Lord Vishnu listed here.

(i) *Matsya* or Fish incarnation of Vishnu—In this incarnation as a Fish or *Matsya*, which is the first of ten divine incarnations of Vishnu, the Lord is said to have saved Manu, the progenitor of mankind, and the Saptarishis (the seven mental sons of the creator Brahma) along with their wives during the dooms-day deluge. They were made to board a boat which was pulled by this Fish and saved from being drowned. They re-populated the world later on. It is a story identical to the Biblical story of the Noah's Arc.

(ii) *Kurma* or Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu—It is the second incarnation of Vishnu. The Lord had supported the legendary Mountain called Mandara which had started sinking during the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal and life.

(iii) *Varaaha* or Boar incarnation of Vishnu—It is the third incarnation of Vishnu in which he killed the demon Hiranyaaksha and lifted the earth from the flood water where it had vanished. According to some versions, this demon had hidden the earth in the bowls of the ocean. This extrication and resurrection of the earth is a symbolic way of saying that the Lord saves the creation from being submerged in the vast ocean of sins and evil. An Upanishad preached by Lord Varaaha appears in the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition as its 30th Upanishad. The female aspect of Varaaha is known as Goddess Vaaraahi.

(iv) *Nrisingh* or half man and half lion incarnation of Vishnu—Lord *Nrisingh* or *Narsingh* is the half lion and half man incarnation of Lord Vishnu to slay the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting Prahalad, his son, because the latter worshipped Vishnu. Lord Vishnu had incarnated as *Nrisingh* to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting his own son Prahalad because the child was a devout follower of Vishnu. After having killed the demon, *Nrisingh* started roaming in the forests, striking terror in the hearts of all the creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of 'Mahadev' as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of *Nrisingh*. [Refer *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 8.] Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot (refer *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 19) and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called 'Rudra', the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between *Nrisingh* and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than *Nrisingh* in order to subdue the latter.

This 'half lion and half man' form of the Lord is a visible image that has a cosmic counterpart as the 'half man and half female' manifestation of the Lord that is known as 'Ardha-Narishwar'. This cosmic form of Brahm as *Ardha-Narishwar* has two components—the right half is depicted in iconography as being a male representing Shiva, the great God, the other half is female representing his divine Shakti known as Parvati or Uma. This Shakti represents the dynamic energy of Shiva. When this applies to Brahm, the male aspect refers to the Supreme Being himself while the female aspect applies to Maya which is the dynamic power that Brahm employed to initiate this magical creation. This depiction is basically envisioned to drive home the point that Brahm and Shakti are inseparable in the context of the creation of the world. This elementary method of reproduction is known as 'asexual reproduction' and is depicted by many asexual plants and animals even today. For instance, the one-celled amoeba reproduces itself by cleavage. On the other hand, if we were to regard Brahm in its purest form as the cosmic Consciousness, then Brahm would not need

the other half of the Maya, and would only be one and universal entity which has no definite and describable form and shape, it has no characteristic features, attributes and qualities. This form of the sublime and most subtle Brahm is known as either the Hiranyagarbha or the Viraat Purush depending upon the level of subtlety and grossness which is assigned to it, the former being more subtle than the latter.

The 'lion' part is a metaphor for the grand qualities of unmatched authority, stupendous strength, physical prowess and complete and unchallenged sway over the entire domain of creation just like a lion has over the forest and its inhabitant wild animals. This term is symbolic of the inherent stupendous might of the supreme Brahm as the unquestioned and powerful Lord of this forest-like world inhabited by myriad varieties of living beings, called the Jivas, just like a dense forest infested by wild animals. Similarly, the 'man' part symbolizes the fact that Brahm is the most highly placed Lord much like a human being who represents the highest level in the ladder of evolution.

In other words, even as the lion is the unquestioned lord of the wilds and the man is of all the living beings, the supreme transcendental Brahm is the unquestioned Lord of all that exists with all its variations in this creation, whether in its primary form represented by the wild and primitive animals of the jungle or in its more evolved and developed form represented by the man, with all the other stages of creation included in between these two.

Lord Nrisingh is the fourth incarnation of the Supreme Being who had taken various forms to ward off and overcome evil forces in creation when they become ascendant and overcame the good and the righteous. The Lord did this to maintain order in the creation which is like his offspring.

So when one of his great devotees known as Prahalaad was being extremely tormented by his own father, the demon Hiranyakashipu, the Lord appeared as Nrisingh—or as a half lion and half man form—from the pillar to which the innocent lad was tied by the demon to prove to him the omnipresence and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being. Nrisingh is a personification of the grand virtues of dynamism, power, energy, valour and strength, and hence is worshipped by warriors and rulers in general. The Mantra of this Lord is believed to be very powerful and effective against enemies and opponents.

Iconographically, there are many forms of Nrisingh. Some of them are as follows—as seated (Aasin), as standing (Sthaanak), as boon-giver (Vardaayak), as ferocious and angry (Ugra), as striding (Yaanak), in the company of Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and the divine consort of Vishnu (Laxmi-Nrisingh), as seated in Yoga or doing meditation like Shiva (Yoga-Nrisingh), as a resident of a mountain (Girija), etc.

His images depict him in either the two-hand form or in a four-hand form. In the latter case, the two back hands hold a conch and discus like the case of Vishnu. The two front hands are shown as killing the demon Hiranyakashipu by forcing the latter on his lap, tearing his abdomen, and yanking his entrails out by his sharp nails.

An entire Puran called Narsingh Puran is likewise dedicated to this Godhead. This Puran glorifies Nrisingh as an incarnation of Vishnu, and is regarded as being synonymous with Narayan, one of the names of Lord Vishnu who is none but the Supreme Being called Brahm. Since Lord Vishnu himself is a macrocosmic, all-inclusive and invisible form of the supreme transcendental Brahm, therefore Nrisingh is a de-facto visible form of the otherwise invisible Brahm.

Similarly, an entire Upanishad known as the *Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition is dedicated to this deity. It also lists the various divine Mantras dedicated to Lord Nrisingh. It is the 7th Upanishad of this Veda.

The *Shuk Rahasya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 27, while describing the process of invoking one of the components 'Asi' ('is') of the Maha Vakya (the great saying of the Vedas) 'Tattwamasi' ('that essence is you') says that the Shakti (dynamic energy) of this individual component 'Asi' is Nrisingh.

The *Skanda Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 13 praises Lord Nrisingh as an incarnation of the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector, and Shiva the concluder of creation. His divine and glorious virtues are similar to Brahm. Earlier in this Upanishad it has already been established that these three Gods of the Trinity are Brahm personified, as well as the fact that the creature's Atma or pure 'self' which is Consciousness personified, are also Brahm personified. Hence, by worshipping Nrisingh one is offering prayers to Brahm and honouring the grand virtues of creation exemplified by the latter. He is also offering worship to the 'consciousness' that represents Brahm in the physical body of Lord Nrisingh.

(v) *Vaaman/Vaman* or the Dwarf incarnation of Vishnu—This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, Vishnu had taken the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a 'Vaaman' or a dwarf, and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step, and for the third step he measured Bali's own head symbolizing the crown of the kingdom of Bali. He put his third step on Bali's head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called 'Trivikram'—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he saw the injustice done to a magnanimous Bali who had been righteous and firm in his vow of making charity, and never rescinded on his commitments. So, the Lord made him the king of the nether world, and himself took up the job of protecting him there as his gatekeeper. This incarnation of Lord Vishnu is his fifth and followed the Nrisingh form which was the fourth. The idea behind this Vaaman incarnation is that even the most humble looking man, represented by the diminutive Vaaman in this story, can indeed have the stupendous power of the Spirit that even the most powerful gods and kings lack.

(vi) *Parashuram* or Ram with a battle-axe—This is the sixth incarnation of Vishnu. Parashuram was the youngest of the five sons of sage Jamdagni and his wife Renuka. He had subdued the haughty Kshatriya race or the warrior race led by king Kaartavirya who had become tyrannical and were oppressing others. The story goes that once Jamdagni doubted the infidelity of his wife Renuka and therefore asked his sons to behead her. The four sons refused and were cursed by him, but Parashuram did as told. The father was pleased and asked Parashuram to request for a boon, upon which the latter requested that his mother be revived, his brothers be pardoned, and Jamdagni should discard his angry temperament. The father agreed to all. Jamdagni was killed by Shursena, the son of Kaartavirya-Arjuna, because the sage had refused to hand over the celestial cow known as Kapila to him. Extremely peeved by the Kshatriya race to which this king belonged, Parashuram vowed to eliminate the entire race from the surface of the earth as a revenge for the killing of his father. This was the reason why Parashuram had fought and killed thousands of Kshatriya to avenge the killing of his father by Kaartavirya-Arjuna.

(vii) *Lord Ram*—This was the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Ram was born in the Ikshwaku dynasty belonging to the solar race that ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya as the son of Dasrath and his eldest queen Kaushalya. In this incarnation, Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity who is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, accompanied him as Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram. The epic story of Ramayan in which the Lord slayed the arrogant and cruel demon Ravana is woven around this incarnation. Lord Ram exemplified the grand virtues of righteousness,

auspiciousness, nobility, propriety and probity, and is therefore lauded as the 'Maryada Purshottam'—the excellent male who always observed the strictest code of proper conduct. Lord Ram's divine name 'Ram' is regarded as a Tarak Mantra—i.e. a Mantra that has the spiritual power to bestow liberation and deliverance to the creature. There are three Upanishads dedicated to the Lord—viz. Ram Purvatapini Upanishad, Ram Uttartapini Upanishad and Mukti Upanishad. The former two belong to the Atharva Veda tradition, and the third to the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition.

Lord Ram manifested himself in the Treta Yug which is the second era of the four-era one cycle of creation according to Hindu philosophy.

Lord Ram had 8 *main devotees* or 'Sevaks' who served him. Different scriptures mention different devotees as being the chief eight Sevaks of Lord Ram as follows—

(a) Vishnu Puran, Ansha (Section) 4, Canto 4, verse no. 99 lists the eight chief devotees as Laxman, Bharat, Shatrughan, Vibhishan, Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman, and Jamvant.

(b) Anand Ramayan, Vilaas Kand, Sarga 1, Ram Stavaraaj, verse no. 18 lists the eight devotees as Laxman, Bharat, Shatrughan, Vidyaadhar, Indra, Siddhas (mystics), Gandharvas, and Kinnars.

(c) Adhyatma Ramayan, Uddha Kand, lists the eight chief devotees as follows:-

Canto 15, verse no. 16 = Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman, Vibhishan;

Canto 15, verse no. 19 = Bharat, Shatrughan, Laxman;

Canto 16, verse no. 8 = Guha or Nishad (boatman).

(viii) *Lord Balraam*—This is regarded as the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. Balram was the strong elder brother of Lord Krishna of the Mahabharat fame. Both Balram and Krishna, being brothers, were born in Dwapar Yug which was the third era of the four-era cycle of creation. At the time of his death, the celestial serpent Sheshnath emerged from his mouth giving credence to the theory that he was an incarnation of Sheshnath who had earlier manifested himself as Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram during the seventh incarnation of Vishnu.

If this is the case then according to some scholars it would not be proper to include Balraam as an incarnation of Vishnu. Therefore, Balraam is excluded from the list and Lord Krishna is regarded as the eighth incarnation.

If this is taken into account, then it is suggested that Lord Buddha who established Buddhism is to be regarded as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu instead of it being Lord Krishna.

(ix) *Lord Krishna*—Krishna is the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. He is a well known deity and it is he who had pronounced the famous Gita and preached it to Arjun on the eve of the epic Mahabharata war. Krishna's story is narrated in full in Srimad Bhagwat Mahapuram. But according to some accounts, Krishna is the eighth incarnation replacing Balraam. This has been explained above.

(x) *Lord Buddha*—He is also regarded as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The word 'Buddha' means 'the enlightened one'. His full name was Gautam Buddha, also known as 'Shakya Muni', the 'hermit who had witnessed the Truth'. He is also regarded as one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu, the tenth one in the series of incarnations.

Lord Vishnu had taken this form at a time when the true essence of religion was being eclipsed by the priestly class who propagated mere mechanical rituals and formal forms of worship and observance of mandatory rites as means to attain liberation and deliverance from this world. The society had become decadent, and the glorious spiritual philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads had been relegated to the background in the face of an onslaught of the priestly class which had vested interest in propagating rituals and rites.

Gautam Buddha was born as Siddharta to king Shubhodhan and his queen Mayadevi at a place called Lumbini. He was married to princess Yashodhara and even had a son Rahul. One day he went out to see his capital city. The sights of distress and pain associated with the world that he saw on that day and subsequent days filled him with remorse and renunciation. He discovered to his dismay that the cocooned life of comfort and pleasure that he had seen and lived within the walls of his palace were like a mirage in a desert, because the actual life in this world is full of pain and sorrows.

He had seen a sick man, an old man, a corpse and a monk—all of which made a deep impression in his sub-conscious mind. He decided that this life is full of sorrow and misery, and that he does not want to live such a life. So one day, on Vaishakha Purnima (full moon night of the 2nd Hindu month of the lunar calendar; roughly April), he renounced his kingdom and became a hermit or monk in the search of Truth and True Peace. He did severe Tapa (meditative penance) under a tree at a place known as Gaya, vowing that he will not get up till he realized the Truth. It is believed that it was here that he became 'Buddha' or the 'Enlightened One who has realized the Truth'.

Then he went to the great pilgrim place of Varanasi (also known as Kashi) and preached in a deer park on the outskirts of the city, at a place called Sarnath. This sermon or preaching came to be known as 'setting the wheel of Dharma in motion': the 'Dharma-Chakra-Pravartan'. It literally means the code of conduct that would change how the laws of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety and proper conduct) can be correctly used by an individual to attain final peace and deliverance. As the name itself suggests, the main tenets of Buddha lay emphasise on right conduct, right thought and right way of living life as a mean of attaining Mukti (liberation and deliverance) as opposed to ritual and rites propagated by the priestly class till then.

Buddha established 'Buddhism' which basically is based on the spiritual philosophy of the Upanishads. In fact, if we closely examine its tenets we discover that they are entirely based on a famous Upanishad known as 'Jabal Darshan Upanishad' of the Sam Veda tradition. Even a cursory reading of Cantos 1 and 2 of this Upanishad will show that all the tenets of Buddhism are founded on it.

Buddhism prescribes that extreme paths of indulgence in worldly luxuries and severe tormenting of the body by 'Tapa' must be avoided. The best path is the 'middle path'. This path is called 'the 8-fold path of discipline or righteousness'. These are the following—right belief, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right means of livelihood, right thought (mind), right means, and right efforts.

Buddhism further prescribed 10 precepts for its monks (or ascetics) —do not kill, do not steal, do not lie, do not drink intoxicants, do not indulge in food, do not engross in pleasures and gratifications, remain chaste, don't sleep in luxury (i.e., observe austerity and self control, desist from indulgences and gratifications), don't accept gold/silver (i.e., be a true renunciate, don't greed or yearn).

The 4 Noble Truths of Buddhism also reflect the basic teaching of the Upanishads—(i) life is full of sorrows, (ii) the cause for this sorrow is craving/desire, (iii) this craving can be overcome by diverting the mind to righteousness (and the Atma, according to the Upanishads), and (iv) the way to do it is following the 8-fold path which are very similar to the tenets outlined in the Jabal Darshan Upanishad.

'Nirvana' (liberation and deliverance) according to Buddha is enlightenment and self-realisation of the Truth that leads to extinction of all sorrows and sufferings.

Gautam Buddha life period varies from 624-544 B.C upto 557-477 B.C.

The teachings of Buddha have been compiled in three canons known as 'Tripitaka'. It consists of Vinaya Pitak, Sutta Pitak and Abhidhhamma Pitak.

(xi) *Kalki*—This would be Vishnu's tenth and last incarnation before one cycle of creation ends. It is predicted that he would be born during the present Kali Yug,

which is the fourth and the last era. He is visualized as riding on the back of a white horse, a drawn sword in hand, eliminating evil-mongers and those who are opposed to Dharma or righteous way of life. His main aim would be to restore Dharma.]

(53)

देव—

सकल सौभाग्यप्रद सर्वतोभद्र—निधि, सर्व, सर्वेश, सर्वाभिरामं ।
 शर्व—हृदि—कंज—मकरंद—मधुकर रुचिर—रूप, भूपालमणि नौमि रामं ।।1।।
 सर्वसुख—धाम गुणग्राम, विश्रामपद, नाम सर्वसपदमति पुनीतं ।
 निर्मलं, शांत, सुविशुद्ध, बोधायतन, क्रोध—मद—हरण, करुणा—निकेतं ।।2।।
 अजित, निरुपाधि, गोतीतमव्यक्त, विभुमेकमनवद्यमजमद्वितीयं ।
 प्राकृतं, प्रकट परमात्मा, परमहित, प्रेरकानंत वंदे तुरीयं ।।3।।
 भूधरं, सुन्दरं, श्रीवरं, मदन—मद—मथन सौन्दर्य—सीमातिरम्यं ।
 दुष्प्राप्य, दुष्प्रेक्ष्य, दुस्तर्क्य, दुष्पार, संसारहर, सुलभ, मृदुभाव—गम्यं ।।4।।
 सत्यकृत, सत्यरत, सत्यव्रत सर्वदा, पुष्ट, संतुष्ट, संकष्टहारी ।
 धर्मवर्मनि ब्रह्मकर्मबोधैक, विप्रपूज्य, ब्रह्मण्यजनप्रिय, मुरारी ।।5।।
 नित्य, निर्मम, नित्यमुक्त, निर्मान, हरि, ज्ञानघन, सच्चिदानंद मूलं ।
 सर्वरक्षक सर्वभक्षकाध्यक्ष, कूटस्थ, गूढार्चि, भक्तानुकूलं ।।6।।
 सिद्ध—साधक—साध्य, वाच्य—वाचकरूप, मंत्र—जापक—जाप्य, सृष्टि—स्रष्टा ।
 परम कारण, कंजनाभ, जलदाभतनु, सगुण, निर्गुण, सकल दृश्य—द्रष्टा ।।7।।
 व्योम—व्यापक, विरज, ब्रह्म, वरदेश, वैकुण्ठ, वामन, विमल ब्रह्मचारी ।
 सिद्ध—वृंदारकावृंदवंदित सदा, खंडि पाखंड—निर्मूलकारी ।।8।।
 पूरनानंदसंदोह, अपहरण संमोह—अज्ञान, गुण—सन्निपातं ।
 वचन—मन—कर्म—गत शरण तुलसीदास त्रास—पाथोधि इव कुंभजातं ।।9।।

(53)

dēva-

sakala saubhāgyaprada sarvatōbhadrā-nidhi, sarva, sarvēśa, sarvābhirāmaṁ.
 śarva-hṛdi-kañja-makaranda-madhukara rucira-rūpa, bhūpālamaṇi naumi
 rāmaṁ. 1.

sarvasukha-dhāma guṇagrāma, viśrāmapada, nāma sarvasapadamati
 punītaṁ.

nirmalaṁ, śānta, suviśud'dha, bōdhāyatana, krōdha-mada-haraṇa, karuṇā-
 nikētaṁ. 2.

ajita, nirupādhi, gōṭitamavyakta, vibhumēkamanavadyamajamadvitīyaṁ.
 prākṛtaṁ, prakāṣa paramātamā, paramahita, prērakānanta vandē turiyaṁ. 3.
 bhūdharaṁ, sundaraṁ, śrīvaraṁ, madana-mada-mathana saundarya-
 sīmātiramyāṁ.

duṣprāpya, duṣprēkṣya, dustakrya, duṣpāra, sansārahara, sulabha,
 mṛdubhāva-gamyāṁ. 4.

satyakṛta, satyarata, satyavrata sarvadā, puṣṭa, santuṣṭa, saṅkaṣṭahārī.
 dharmavarmani brahmakarmabōdhaika, viprapūjya, brahmaṇyajana priya,
 murārī. 5.

nitya, nirmama, nityamukta, nirmāna, hari, jñānaghana, saccidānanda mūlaṁ. sarvarakṣaka sarvabhakṣakādhyakṣa, kūṭastha, gūṛhārci, bhaktānukūlaṁ. 6. sid'dha-sādhaka-sādhya, vācya-vācakarūpa, mantra-jāpaka-jāpya, sṛṣṭi-sraṣṭā. parama kāraṇa, kaṇjanābha, jaladābhatanu, saṅga, nirguṇa, sakala dr̥śya-draṣṭā. 7. vyōma-vyāpaka, viraja, brahma, varadēśa, vaikunṭha, vāmana, vimala brahmacārī. sid'dha-vṛndārakāvṛndavandita sadā, khaṇḍi pākhaṇḍa-nirmūlakārī. 8. pūranānandasandōha, apaharana sammōha-ajñāna, guṇa-sannipātaṁ. vacana-mana-karma-gata śaraṇa tulasīdāsa trāsa-pāthōdhi iva kumbhajātaṁ. 9.

Verse no. 53—I bow to Lord Ram, who bestows all welfare, is a store-house of all auspiciousness, is revealed in the form of the universe (i.e. the creation is an image of the Lord and is created in his likeness)¹, is the Lord of the universe, the provider of happiness and joy to all, is like a bumble-bee for the purpose of drinking the nectar stored in the lotus-like heart of Lord Shiva, is of attractive and captivating beauty, and is the most exalted amongst the kings of this world. (1).

Oh Lord Ram! You are the abode of all happiness and comforts, a treasury of all virtues, and the bestower of supreme bliss. Your name can provide all desired things in this world, and it is most pure and holy. You are pure, clean and holy (uncorrupt; untainted; divine); you are calm, tranquil, peaceful, placid; you are an embodiment of knowledge and wisdom; you are the destroyer of anger, pride, vanity, arrogance and hypocrisy; and you are an abode of mercy, grace and kindness. (2).

You are invincible, beyond honour and attributes, and beyond the reach of the mind and perception of the senses (i.e. beyond comprehension). You cannot be described. You are all-pervading, ubiquitous and omnipresent, without a second, without faults, without birth, without any match (i.e. you are unique, peerless and one of your own kind that has no parallel). In spite of being a Parmatma (Supreme Atma, the Supreme Being), you manifested yourself in this world along with your divine Shakti known as Prakriti. [That is, in spite of being the Supreme Being who is invisible, formless, attributeless and the all-pervading cosmic Consciousness, you had manifested on this earth as a human being along with your cosmic Shakti, or your cosmic energy and dynamism, that revealed itself alongside you in the form of Sita. The same Shakti in its macrocosmic form is known as Prakriti or Mother Nature.]

You are the greatest benefactor and the greatest well-wisher of all, and it is you who give inspiration to all. You are without an end, are infinite and eternal. Your divine form has two manifestations—one is the macrocosmic form that is subtle, invisible, all-pervading, all-encompassing and without any attributes, and the other is the microcosmic form that is visible, has attributes and a gross body. I bow my head to such a Lord Ram who is majestic and beyond definition. (3).

You bear (i.e. sustain) the earth, are magnificent, Lord of Laxmi, crush the pride and vanity of Kamdeo who is proud of his beauty, are the benchmark of magnificence, and are most attractive and pleasant. It is very difficult to attain you and have your Darshan (divine or holy viewing). No one can understand you by logic (and using one's intelligence), and it is also very difficult to measure (or understand) your marvels and worldly activities. You can, by your grace and kindness, remove (liberate

or deliver) one from the journey of birth and death (transmigration of soul) which constitutes this existence (the mundane world as we know it). You give Darshan (manifest yourself) to your devotees easily (without much effort or cumbersome rituals), and you are easily attainable by simplicity, humility, love, affection and devotion. (4).

You create 'Truth', live in 'Truth', and are true to your vows and words. You are always healthy and endowed with robust and divine energy and powers. You are ever (eternally) contented, and are the remover of great sorrows, miseries and tribulations. Dharma (righteous, scrupulousness, probity, propriety) is your shield. You are matchless in the knowledge and understanding of Brahm (the formless, attributeless, absolute, all-pervading Truth; the cosmic supreme Consciousness) and Karma (assigned duties). You are worshipped by the Brahmins, are the beloved of Brahmins as well as devotees, and are the slayer of the demon Mur. (5).

Oh Hari! You are constant, without attachments, eternally free, without pride, vanity or ego, eliminator of sins, embodiment of wisdom, abode of supreme bliss, and the root cause of everything. You are the protector of all, the Lord of Yam (who devours all in the form of death), Kuthastha (i.e. unchangeable, immovable, steady, constant, exalted, secret), endowed with (or possessed of) mystical glory, splendour and radiance, have stupendous mercy, and show graciousness towards your devotees. (6).

You are the goal and the seeker of that goal. You possess all the mystical powers that exist in this creation, making you a Siddha or one who is empowered, attained, realised and enlightened. You are the speaker as well as the speech. You are the Mantra (divine words representing God; a group of syllables or alphabets having magical charm), the chanter of those Mantras, as well as the Divine-Being himself represented by those Mantras. You are the creation as well as the creator, and you are the ultimate cause (reason) of both of them. The celebrated legendary Lotus (representing purity) has emerged from your navel. Your complexion is as beauteous as the dark rain-bearing cloud. You are both the Saguna (formed) as well as the Nirguna (formless, attributeless) one. You are manifested in the form of this entire visible creation, and at the same time you are its observer—both of these are you.

[This seems incredulous on the face of it, but when one studies the principles of metaphysics one learns that everything in creation is a manifestation of one single Truth known as the cosmic Consciousness. And since this single entity has revealed itself in every conceivable form in this creation, including the creation itself, it naturally follows that both the seer and the thing seen, both the creator and the created, both the worshipper and the object of worship, and so on and so forth are fundamentally the same entity.] (7).

You are all-pervading and all encompassing like the sky. You are without any attachments and delusions. You are the supreme Brahm, and the Lord of the boon-giving Gods. One of your abodes is in Vaikunth (i.e. in spite of you being omnipresent and all-pervading, your divine form as Lord Vishnu lives in the highest heaven known as Vaikunth). You had revealed your self as the young Brahmachari (a celibate Brahmin) known as Vaaman. [This refers to Lord Vishnu's manifestation as the dwarf mendicant known as Vaaman, literally meaning a 'dwarf'.]

Siddhas (the attained and enlightened ones) and the congregation of Gods always worship and venerate you. You break (remove, uproot) deceit, crookedness,

fraud, heresy, false doctrines, hypocrisy, haughtiness etc., and render them rootless (i.e. you make them totally ineffective, in vain, harmless and of no consequence). (8).

You are a treasure of pure and supreme bliss. You are the eliminator (remover) of ignorance, imprudence and the three traditional Gunas (qualities) that act as torments for all the creatures. [These three Gunas are known as Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. They are present in each individual in varying combinations. This decides the character, nature and personality of the individual.]

This fellow Tulsidas has taken complete shelter in your (Lord Ram's) holy feet, and has surrendered himself before you with his mind, heart and deeds (i.e. in totality, completely, without any reservations whatsoever). You are like sage Agastya personified for the purpose of drying-up the ocean of fear of this mundane existence. [Legend has it that sage Agastya had drunk the entire ocean in three gulps. So the allusion to this incident by Tulsidas means that Lord Ram is capable of removing all types of fears arising out of mundane existence in this fearsome gross world that is full of sorrows and pains.] (9).

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that Lord Ram is a manifested form of Brahm, the Supreme Being. In the views of the Upanishads, Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness that forms the essence and the truth of creation. Just like a clay pitcher has clay as its basic identity and raw material, and without the clay there would be no pitcher though the former cannot be visibly seen in the latter once the clay has assumed the form of a pitcher, Brahm has assumed the form of this creation and cannot be separated from it. If there is no Brahm, there would be no creation just as there would be no pitcher without the clay.]

(54)

देव—

विश्व—विख्यात, विश्वेश, विश्वायतन, विश्वमरजाद, व्यालारिगामी ।
 ब्रह्म, वरदेश, वागीश, व्यापक, बिमल, बिपुल बलवान, निर्वाणस्वामी ।।1।।
 प्रकृति, महत्त्व, शब्दादि गुण, देवता व्योम, मरुदग्नि, अमलांबु, उर्वी ।
 बुद्धि, मन, इंद्रिय, प्राण, चित्तात्मा, काल, परमाणु, चिच्छक्ति गुर्वी ।।2।।
 सर्वमेवात्र त्वद्रूप भूपालमणी! व्यक्तमव्यक्त, गतभेद, बिष्णो ।
 भुवन भवदंग, कामारि—वंदित, पदद्वंद्व मंदाकिनी—जनक, जिष्णो ।।3।।
 आदिमध्यांत, भगवंत! त्वं सर्वगतमीश, पश्यन्ति ये ब्रह्मवादी ।
 यथा पट—तंतु, घट—मृत्तिका, सर्प—स्रग, दारु करि, कनक—कटकांगदादी ।।4।।
 गूढ, गंभीर, गर्वघ्न, गूढार्थवित, गुप्त, गोतीत, गुरु, ग्यान—ग्याता ।
 ग्येय, ग्यानप्रिय, प्रचुर गरिमागार, घोर—संसार—पर, पार दाता ।।5।।
 सत्यसंकल्प, अतिकल्प, कल्पांतकृत, कल्पनातीत, अहि तल्पवासी ।
 वनज—लोचन, वनज—नाभ, वनदाभ—वपु, वनचरध्वज—कोटि—लावण्यरासी ।।6।।
 सुकर, दुःकर, दुराराध्य, दुर्व्यसनहर, दुर्ग, दुर्द्धर्ष, दुर्गार्तिहर्ता ।
 वेदगर्भाभकादर्भ—गुणगर्व, अर्वागपर—गर्व—निर्वाप—कर्ता ।।7।।
 भक्त—अनुकूल, भवशूल—निर्मूलकर, तूलअघ—नाम पावक—समानं ।
 तरलतृष्णातमी—तरणि, धरणीधरण, शरण—भयहरण, करुणानिधानं ।।8।।
 बहुल वृंदारकावृंद—वंदारु—पद—द्वंद्व मंदार—मालोर—धारी ।
 पाहि मामीश संताप—संकुल सदा दास तुलसी प्रणत रावणारी ।।9।।

(54)

dēva-

viśva-vikhyāta, viśvēśa, viśvāyatana, viśvamarajāda, vyālārigāmī.

brahma, varadēśa, vāgīśa, vyāpaka, bimala, bipula balavāna, nirvānasvāmī. 1.
 prakṛti, mahatatva, śabdādi guṇa, dēvatā vyōma, marudagni, amalāmbu, urvī.
 bud'dhi, mana, indriya, prāṇa, cittātamā, kāla, paramāṇu, cicchakti gurvī. 2.
 sarvamēvātra tvadrūpa bhūpālamanī! vyaktamavyakta, gatabhēda, biṣṇō.
 bhuvana bhavadaṅga, kāmāri-vandita, padadvandva mandākinī-janaka, jīṣṇō.
 3.

ādimadhyānta, bhagavanta! tvam sarvagatamīśa, paśyanti yē brahmavādī.
 yathā paṭa-tantu, ghaṭa-mṛttikā, sarpa-sraga, dāru kari, kanaka-
 kaṭakāṅgadādī. 4.

gūṛha, gambhīra, garvaghna, gūḍhārthavita, gupta, gōtita, guru, gyāna-gyātā.
 gyēya, gyānapriya, pracura garimāgāra, ghōra-sansāra-para, pāra dātā. 5.
 satyasaṅkalpa, atikalpa, kalpāntakṛta, kalpanātita, ahi talpavāsī.
 vanaja-lōcana, vanaja-nābha, vanadābha-vapu, vanacaradhvaja-kōṭi-
 lāvaṇyarāsī. 6.

sukara, duḥkara, durārādhyā, duvryasanahara, durga, durd'dharṣa,
 durgātrtihatrtā.

vēdagarbhārbhakādarbha-gunagarva, arvāgapara-garva-nirvāpa-katrtā. 7.
 bhakta-anukūla, bhavaśūla-nirmūlakara, tūla'agha--nāma pāvaka-samānaṁ.
 tarala tṛṣṇātamī-taraṇi, dharaṇīdharaṇa, śaraṇa-bhayaharaṇa,
 karuṇānidhānaṁ. 8.

bahula vṛndārakāvṛnda-vandāru-pada-dvandva mandāra-mālōra-dhārī.
 pāhi māmīśa santāpa-saṅkula sadā dāsa tulasī praṇata rāvaṇārī. 9.

Verse no. 54—Oh Lord Ram! You are famed in the world, the Lord of the entire universe, an embodiment of this creation, an embodiment of the law (sanctified code of behaviour) of the world, and one who mounts Garud (an eagle). You are Brahm, the Supreme Being. You are the Lord of Brahma (the creator) and other Gods who are empowered to give boons, as well as the Lord of speech and knowledge. You are all-pervading, ubiquitous, omnipresent, most holy and divine, almighty, and the patron God of the most exalted stage of the soul when it reaches its emancipation and salvation. (1).

The Primary Nature, the best and most excellent elements and essence of creation known as the Tattwas, the 'word', the various feelings (sense of touch), the perception of sight (visible form), taste and smell, the three Gunas known as 'Sata' (truthfulness and the best quality in creation), 'Raja' (the second quality of all living beings which produce desires) and 'Tama' (the third and the meanest quality of creatures producing malignant tendencies), all the Gods, the five elements of creation such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth, the intellect, wisdom and mind, the ten sense organs¹, the five Prans (life giving vital winds or airs)², thought, mind and concentration, the Atma or soul, the Kaal (factor time or death), the Parmaanu (i.e. the 'atom' which is the basic unit of all things in this creation), and the great 'Chaitanya'—the life giving Consciousness etc.—all these are your (Lord Ram's) various forms. Oh the best among the kings! You are everything which is visible as well as invisible. You reside

uniformly, universally and in a seamless continuity in the entire creation. This whole creation is but only a fraction of your cosmic 'Self'. Lord Shiva worships and venerates your holy feet, and river Ganges has emerged from them. You are all conquering and ever victorious. (2-3).

Oh God! You are the beginning, the present and the end; you prevail in all, are ubiquitous and omnipresent. Oh Lord! Those wise-ones who have attained the true knowledge of Brahm (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness that is the eternal, formless, universal and all-pervading Truth) see you as the basic ingredient (composition, constituent, essence or basic element) in all things in this creation like cotton is present in cloth, mud is present in an earthen-pitcher, a garland can be visualized in the rounded form of a serpent, wood is inherent in or integral to a wooden elephant, and gold is the basic element that is moulded to give it another name such as a bracelet, and armlet and other such ornament made of gold.

[We call a golden bracelet a 'bracelet' and not gold, but we don't realise that the basic and intrinsic value of this bracelet is in the quantity and purity of gold that it contains. We would not value a similarly designed bracelet if it is made of iron, would we? Similarly, this creation just wouldn't exist without Lord Ram in his all-pervading cosmic form known as the supreme Consciousness. This 'Consciousness' is the primary 'atom' that acts as the basic building block of everything that exists in this creation. Just like we can't see the atom but see its manifestation in the form of a physical body or thing, we cannot see the Consciousness hidden in the gross form that this creation takes. But the very fact that 'life' exists in this creation is enough proof of the presence of the Consciousness just like the existence of anything proves that there are atoms in it. The wise perception of this creation is to see the same universal Truth known as Consciousness that is hidden behind the external façade of physical characteristics which vary from one individual to another. Lord Ram personifies this universal Truth and the cosmic Consciousness.] (4).

In a similar way you are very mysterious and strange (it is too difficult to understand you). You are solemn and serious. You are a vanquisher of pride, vanity and haughtiness. You are the one who knows all the secrets because you are omniscient, and you are the 'secret' itself. [The 'secret' here refers to the Atma or the pure conscious soul that resides in the gross body of an individual. Nothing is hidden from the Lord because he lives in the heart as the Atma which is privy to all the thoughts and emotions of the creature.]

You are beyond the reach of the mind and perception by the sense organs. You are the preceptor (teacher) for the whole world (because you are all-knowing and the Supreme Being). You fully attained or expert in wisdom, an embodiment of knowledge, and one who loves the virtues of true enlightenment, knowledge and wisdom. You are a store-house or treasury or a fount of great renown, fame, eminence and respect (i.e. you are worthy of it). You can help a creature to cross this huge ocean of mundane, deluding existence consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death. (5).

You are true to your words. You can annihilate the world as well as the universe (you are almighty and the concluder of creation). No one can imagine or measure you by his mind and intellect. You reside (recline) on the bed made of Sesh Nath. [This refers to Lord Vishnu who reclines on the bed made by the coiled body of the celestial

serpent known as Sesh Nath who floats on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk called Kshir-sagar.]

Your eyes are like a lotus flower; the lotus flower itself has emerged from your navel. [This lotus emerged from the navel of reclining Vishnu, and from this lotus was born the creator of the visible world known as Brahma.]

The complexion of your body is dark like the rain bearing clouds. You are a treasury of beauty, charm and attractiveness which is equivalent to millions of Kamdeos. [The Kamdeo is the god of passions, and is regarded as being the most charming to look at.] (6).

You are easily accessible for your devotees, but most inaccessible for the rascals, the miscreants and those who are wicked. [Only those with a pure heart can attain the Lord; those whose heart is perverted cannot find him.]

In the path of your devotion, one has to face great hurdles (to test one's tenacity and sincerity of devotion). You destroy all the bad or evil qualities and characters of your devotees. [You make them holy and pure.]

You are very difficult to attain and most formidable. You can eliminate, remove or dispel great troubles, tribulations, sufferings and sorrows. You had removed the pride and vanity of Brahma's son Sankadi³ about his knowledge of the 'Para and Aparā'⁴. (7).

You are always kind and benevolent towards your devotees. You can uproot (remove) the torments, miseries and tribulations caused by this world consisting of a cycle of birth and death. Your name 'Ram' is like a fire for the purpose of burning the cotton of sin. You are like a 'sun' for the purpose of eliminating (removing, overcoming) the night represented by ever changing (unsatisfied) desires. You bear the burden of the earth. You remove the fear of those who have taken your refuge. And you are the abode of mercy and compassion. (8).

The various communities of Gods worship and revere your holy feet. You wear a garland of Mandaar flowers on your chest. [Mandaar = the coral tree.]

Oh Lord Ram, the enemy of Ravana! I, who am always tormented by the miseries and troubles (of Kaliyug), have taken the refuge and the shelter of your holy feet. Oh Lord! Save and protect me! (9).

[Note—¹The *ten sense organs* are said to be the following—five organs of perception such as the eye which sees, the tongue which tastes, the nose which smells, the ear which hears, and the skin which feels. The five organs of action are the following—the hands which accept, the legs which take the creature to his desired place, the mouth which speaks and eats, the excretory which eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which help in reproduction and give him pleasure.

²The *five Prans* are the following—Pran (the vital air which sustains life), Apan (the wind which passes through the anus), Samaan (equivalent or balancing force of life), Byan (the vital air which pervades throughout the body and the mind), Udaan (the air which rises up the throat, e.g., belching) respectively.

³Vanity of sage Sankadi (pronounced as 'Sunkaadi') (vēdagarbhārbhakādarbha-gunagarva, arvāgapara-garva-nirvāpa-katrtā):

Brahma's son Sankadi asked his father some questions relating to metaphysics and transcendental knowledge (Para-Apara Vidya=knowledge which is within as well as beyond comprehension; the knowledge of the micro as well as the macro self), which the former could not answer. This instilled pride in the son. Brahma asked

Vishnu to remove the pride of Sankadi, at which the latter became a Swan and explained to Sankadi the essence and the most intricate of knowledge related to the subject. This crushed his vanity and haughtiness. The cult of 'Nimbaark' regard this swan (as manifestation of Vishnu and embodiment of wisdom and knowledge) as their patron and the first Guru.

⁴*Para and Aparā Vidya*—References: Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 28-30; Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, sections 1, verse no. 4-5.

The word *Para Vidya* refers to that knowledge which is transcendental and beyond the normal field of knowledge that can be acquired in this mundane world by study; the knowledge which relates to the supreme 'self' or the pure conscious Atma; the knowledge of things that is beyond the range of bodily perception and comprehension. It is the knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm which is the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation. The *Parā Vidya* relates to the invisible and unknown Divinity that is eternal, infinite and imperishable, and whose Mantra is OM. [Refer—Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1, verse no. 4-5.]

It has been extensively described in Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1, verse nos. 4-9.

On the other hand, *Aparā Vidya* means that body of knowledge that is known and which can enlighten the aspirant about the *Parā Vidya* which is the knowledge of the transcendental Brahm. In this category come the four Vedas—the Rik, the Sam, the Yajur and the Atharva. Refer—Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1, verse no. 4-5.

It has been extensively described in Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 2, verse nos. 4-5.]

(55)

देव—

संत—संतापहर, विश्व—विश्रामकर, राम कामारि, अभिरामकारी ।
 शुद्ध बोधायतन, सच्चिदानंदघन, सज्जनानंद—वर्धन, खरारी ।।1।।
 शील—समता—भवन, विषमता—मति—शमन, राम रामारमन, रावनारी ।
 खड्गकर, चर्मवर—वर्मधर, रुचिर कटि तूण शर—शक्ति सारंगधारी ।।2।।
 सत्यसंधान, निर्वानप्रद, सर्वहित, सर्वगुण—ज्ञान—विज्ञानशाली ।
 सघन—तम—घोर—संसार—भर—शर्वरी नामदिवसेश खर—किरणमाली ।।3।।
 तपन तीच्छन तरुन तीव्र तापघ्न, तपरूप, तनभूप, तमपर, तपस्वी ।
 मान—मद—मदन—मत्सर—मनोरथ—मथन, मोह—अंभोधि—मंदर, मनस्वी ।।4।।
 वेद—विख्यात, वरदेश, वामन, विरज, विमल, वागीश, वैकुण्ठस्वामी ।
 काम—क्रोधादिमर्दन, विवर्धन, छमा—शांति—विग्रह, विहगराज—गामी ।।5।।
 परम पावन, पाप—पुंज—मुंजाटवी—अनलइव निमिष निर्मूलकर्ता ।
 भुवन—भूषण, दूषणारि, भुवनेश, भूनाथ, श्रुतिमाथ जय भुवनभर्ता ।।6।।
 अमल, अविचल, अकल, सकल, संतप्त—कलि—विकलता—भंजनानंदरासी ।
 उरगनायक—शयन, तरुणपंकज—नयन, छीरसागर—अयन, सर्ववासी ।।7।।
 सिद्ध—कवि—कोविदानंद—दायक पदद्वंद्व मंदात्ममनुजैर्दुराप ।
 यत्र संभूत अतिपूत जल सुरसरी दर्शनादेव अपहरति पापं ।।8।।
 नित्य निर्मुक्त, संयुक्तगुण, निर्गुणानंद, भगवंत, न्यामक, नियंता ।
 विश्व—पोषण—भरण, विश्व—कारण—करण, शरण तुलसीदास त्रास—हंता ।।9।।

(55)

dēva-

santa-santāpahara, viśva-viśrāmakara, rāma kāmāri, abhirāmakārī.
śud'dha bōdhāyatana, saccidānandaghana, sajjanānanda-var dhana, kharārī.

1.

śīla-samatā-bhavana, viśamatā-mati-śamana, rāma rāmāramana, rāvanārī.
khaṅgākara, carmavara-varmadhara, rucira kaṭi tūṇa śara-śakti sārāṅgadhārī.

2.

satyasandhāna, nirvānaprada, sarvahita, sarvaguṇa-jñāna-vijñānaśālī.
saghana-tama-ghōra-sansāra-bhara-śarvarī-nāma divasēśa khara-kiraṇamālī.

3.

tapana tīcchana taruna tīvra tāpaghna, taparūpa, tanabhūpa, tamapara,
tapasvī.

māna-mada-madana-matsara-manōratha-mathana, mōha-ambhōdhi-
mandara, manasvī. 4.

vēda-vikhyāta, varadēśa, vāmana, viraja, vimala, vāgīśa, vaikuṇṭhasvāmī.
kāma-krōdhādīmardana, vivardhana, chamā-śānti-vigraha, vihagarāja-gāmī.

5.

parama pāvana, pāpa-punja-munjāṭavī-anala'iva nimiśa nirmūlakatrtā.
bhuvana-bhūṣaṇa, dūṣaṇārī, bhuvanēśa, bhūnātha, śrutimātha jaya
bhuvanabhatrtā. 6.

amala, avicala, akala, sakala, santapta-kali-vikalatā-bhañjanānandarāsī.
uraganāyaka-śayana, taruṇapañkaja-nayana, chīrasāgara-ayana, sarvavāsī. 7.

sid'dha-kavi-kōvidānanda-dāyaka padadvandva mandātmamanujairdurāpaṁ.

yatra sambhūta atipūta jala surasārī darśanādēva apaharati pāpaṁ. 8.

nitya nirmukta, sanyuktaguṇa, nirguṇānanda, bhagavanta, n'yāmaka, niyantā.
viśva-pōṣaṇa-bharaṇa, viśva-kāraṇa-karaṇa, śaraṇa tulasīdāsa trāsa-hantā. 9.

Verse no. 55—Oh Lord Ram! You remove the torments and suffering of saints. You give the universe rest in yourself at the time of the ultimate dissolution (or annihilation) of creation at the time of dooms-day. [The entire creation collapses and merges back into you or devolves in you. It had earlier emerged from you, and it retraces its path back to you. It will remain merged in you till the time of the next phase of creation when it will start emerging from you once again.] You provide happiness and joy to Lord Shiva (who is the designated God responsible for conclusion of creation). [That is, Lord Shiva is pleased that you have done the job of winding up the creation for him, and the credit of this stupendous achievement is got by Shiva. So he is pleased that he gets the credit for free!]

You are the abode of pure wisdom and truthful knowledge, and are a treasury of eternal bliss and peace. [Pure wisdom and truthful knowledge gives eternal peace and bliss to the enlightened man.]

You are the one who enhances the pleasure and happiness of gentlemen, and you are an enemy of the demon Khar. [That is, while pious and righteous people love you, those who are evil and corrupt and cruel treat you as their enemy, and therefore fear you.] (1).

Oh Lord Ram! You are an abode of excellent characters and exemplary qualities such as modesty, propriety, kindness as well as fortitude, equality and equanimity. You are the eliminator of dissension, discord, differences or disputes caused by discrimination and disparity. You are the Lord of Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth and prosperity), and an enemy of Ravana (the demon). You are naturally endowed with the glorious virtue known as 'Shakti' (strength, dynamism, energy, vigour, valour, authority and powers). You (therefore) hold a bow, an arrow, a sword, and an attractive shield in your hands, your body is adorned by armour, and a quiver is tied around your waist. [These weapons are used by brave warriors, and they are symbols of strength and power.] (2).

You are true to and steadfast in your words. You are a bestower of all auspiciousness and welfare. You are a benevolent benefactor who is favourable to all. You are complete with all the divine qualities, all the knowledge and all the wisdom. Your name of 'Ram' is akin to the powerful rays of the sun for overcoming or eliminating the darkness of night symbolising ignorance and delusions associated with this mundane and mortal world. (3).

Your divine radiance and splendour are brilliant. You destroy the numerous and fierce torments, miseries and sufferings of this world which keep on emerging endlessly one after another. And though you have a body of a human King (who are generally very indulgent), you are an embodiment of Tapa (austerities, self-control, penance etc.). [This refers to the physical form of Lord Ram as the king of Ayodhya. But unlike the kings of this world, he practices exceptional virtues of Tapa and remains aloof from the world of sense objects as well as from the demands of the sense organs for self gratification.]

You are beyond ignorance and delusions. You're the one who has exemplary control over one's own self. You are like the legendary Mandrachal mountain for churning the ocean of pride, vanity, hypocrisy, haughtiness, jealousy, envy, anger, lust, passions, desires, delusions etc. [This mountain was used as a turning rod to churn the ocean by the demons and the gods in search of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity.]

You are very wise and thoughtful. (4).

You are the Lord of the Gods who are famous in the Vedas and bestow boons. You are Vaaman. [Vaaman was a manifestation of Lord Vishnu in the form of a Brahmin mendicant who was like a dwarf. The word 'Vaaman' means a dwarf. Hence, this stanza means that it was Lord Ram in his primary cosmic form of Lord Vishnu who had revealed himself as Vaaman].

You are an exemplary renouncer and remain detached from everything. You are most pure and holy. You are the Lord of speech as well as the Lord of Vaikunth (heaven, abode of Vishnu). You destroy Kaam (lust, passion, desire), Krodh (indignation, wrath, anger), Lobh (greed, avarice, covetousness) etc. You are the enhancer of the quality of forgiveness, tolerance and fortitude. You are an embodiment of peace and tranquility. You mount on Garuda, the king of birds. [Garud is the mount of Lord Vishnu. Its reference here implies that Lord Ram is Lord Vishnu himself personified.] (5).

You are very pure and are like 'fire' to burn instantly the forest of tall reeds known as 'Munj' representing the treasury of sins. [That is, you are pure and uncorrupt like the

‘fire’, and you destroy all sins like the fire that destroys huge bundles of reed, burning them to ashes in a short time.]

You are the ornament of the universe. [You are the most exalted and adorable Lord in the entire creation. The creation gets its value, importance and meaning because of the fact that you are present in it as its Lord.]

You are an enemy of the demon Dushan, Lord of the world (universe) as well as the earth, the head (the essence, the most revered deity) of the Vedas, and the sustainer of the whole universe (creation). Glory to you! (6).

You are most pure, uncorrupt and holy. You are unchangeable as well as changeable. [You are ‘unchangeable’ because you are the Absolute Truth of creation and the essence of the living world that is known as Consciousness which is a common denominator in the entire creation. You are ‘changeable’ because this world, which is your own manifestation, is always changing. No two things and no two individuals are alike in this world though it is you who pervades uniformly in them and are their truthful identity.] You are universal and uniform in this creation. [You pervade uniformly throughout this creation.]

You are the destroyer of the agitations and agonies of the creatures caused by the scorching (tormenting) effects of Kaliyug, and are the treasury of happiness, joy and bliss (for them). You recline on (the bedstead of) Sesh Nath (the legendary serpent floating on the surface of the Kshir-sagar). Your eyes are like a blooming lotus flower. You visibly reside in the ‘Kshir-sagar’ (the legendary celestial ocean of milk), and invisibly in the form of this creation. [Lord Vishnu is ‘visualized’ by the Purans as reclining on the coiled body of Shesh-nath as the latter floats on the surface of Kshir-sagar. On the other hand, the same Lord has manifested himself as this creation and lives in it as its Atma, its soul, which is ‘invisible’. Though the entire visible world is a revelation or a manifestation of the Supreme Being, no one can actually see that Supreme Being with one’s physical eyes though he is all-pervading, ubiquitous and omnipresent in this creation.] (7).

These two holy feet of yours, which give happiness and comfort to Siddhas (mystics), Kavis (poets, bards, those who are expert in language and expression) and Vidvans (learned men and wise ones). You are inaccessible to and unattainable by the wicked and rascals. The river Ganges, whose water is most pure and holy, has emerged from your feet, while sins and evils are eliminated by the mere sight of them. (8).

You are eternal, free from all delusions, an abode of divine qualities, without the (tainting effects of) three ‘Gunas’ (Satvik, Rajasic, Tamasic), and an embodiment of bliss, happiness and joys. You are ‘Bhagwan’¹ who is endowed with the six celebrated virtues or qualities. You are a strict follower of all auspicious rules, regulations and sanctified codes of conduct, and one who reigns over the entire creation. You are the sustainer of the entire universe, as well as the original cause (or the very origin of) the world.

Oh Lord, you are the remover of all fears of this refugee Tulsidas. (9).

[Note—¹The word “Bhagwan” has two syllables ‘Bhag’ and ‘Wan’. The second syllable ‘Wan’ means one who possesses, or is in the possession of. The first syllable ‘Bhag’ means the following six qualities—(i) Possessing all the qualities that are called Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct). (ii) Possessing all the qualities that are called Yash (good name and fame; renown and majesty; (iii) Possessing all the qualities that are called Aishwarya (glories, good fortunes,

supremacy, sway, greatness, majesty, magnificence, grandeur, successes and achievements; (iv) Possessing all the qualities that are called Sri (wealth, prosperity, authority, powers, potentials, proficiencies, successes and achievements; (v) Possessing all the qualities that are called Gyan (the best of all knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment; and (vi) Possessing all the qualities that are called Vairagya (dispassion, detachment, renunciation, leading to freedom from delusions and entanglements).

Hence, Bhagwan is a person who possesses, or is an embodiment of all these six eclectic qualities or virtues.]

(56)

देव—

दनुजसूदन, दयासिंधु, दंभापहन, दहन दुर्दोष, दर्पापहर्ता ।
 दुष्टतादमन, दमभवन, दुःखौघहर, दुर्ग दुर्वासना नाशकर्ता ।।1।।
 भूरिभूषण, भानुमंत, भगवत, भव—भंजनाभयद, भुवनेश भारी ।
 भावनातीत, भववंद्य, भवभक्तहित, भूमिउद्धरण, भूधरण—धारी ।।2।।
 वरद, वनदाभ, वागीश, विश्वातमा, विरज, वैकुण्ठ—मन्दिर—बिहारी ।
 व्यापक व्योम, वंदारु, वामन, विभो, ब्रह्मविद, ब्रह्म, चिंतापहारी ।।3।।
 सहज सुंदर, सुमुख, सुमन, शुभ सर्वदा, शुद्ध सर्वज्ञ, स्वच्छन्दचारी ।
 सर्वकृत, सर्वभूत, सर्वजित, सर्वहित, सत्य—संकल्प, कल्पांतकारी ।।4।।
 नित्य, निर्मोह, निर्गुण, निरंजन, निजानंद, निर्वाण, निर्वाणदाता ।
 निर्भरानंद, निःकंप, निःसीम, निर्मुक्त, निरुपाधि, निर्मम, विधाता ।।5।।
 महामंगलमूल, मोद—महिमायतन, मुग्ध—मधु—मथन, मानद, अमानी ।
 मदनमर्दन, मदातीत, मायारहित, मंजु मानाथ, पाथोजपानी ।।6।।
 कमल—लोचन, कलाकोश, कोदंडघर, कोशलाधीश, कल्याणरासी ।
 यातुधान प्रचुर मत्तकरि—केसरी, भक्तमन—पुण्य—आरण्यवासी ।।7।।
 अनघ, अद्वैत, अनवद्य, अव्यक्त, अज, अमित, अविकार, आनंदसिंधो ।
 अचल, अनिकेत, अविरल, अनामय, अनारंभ, अंभोदनादहन—बंधो ।।8।।
 दासतुलसी खेदखिन्न, आपन्न इह, शोकसंपन्न, अतिशय सभितं ।
 प्रणतपालक राम, परम करुणाधाम, पाहि मामुर्विपति, दुर्विनीतं ।।9।।

(56)

dēva-

danujāsūdana, dayāsindhu, dambhāpahana, dahana durdōṣa, darpāpahatrtā.
 duṣṭatādamana, damabhavana, duḥkhaughahara, durga durvāsanā
 nāśakatrtā. 1.

bhūribhūṣaṇa, bhānumanta, bhagavanta, bhava-bhañjanābhayada,
 bhuvanēśa bhārī.

bhāvanātīta, bhavavandya, bhavabhaktahita, bhūmi'ud'dharaṇa, bhūdharaṇa-
 dhārī. 2.

varada, vanadābha, vāgīśa, viśvātāmā, viraja, vaikunṭha-mandira-bihārī.
 vyāpaka vyōma, vandāru, vāmana, vibhō, brahmavida, brahma, cintāpahārī.

3.

sahaja sundara, sumukha, sumana, śubha sarvadā, śud'dha sarvajña, svacchandacārī.
 sarvakṛta, sarvabhṛta, sarvajita, sarvahita, satya-saṅkalpa, kalpāntakārī. 4.
 nitya, nirmōha, nirguṇa, niranjana, nijānanda, nirvāṇa, nirvāṇadātā.
 nirbharānanda, niḥkampa, niḥsīma, nirmukta, nirupādhi, nirmama, vidhātā. 5.
 mahāmaṅgalamūla, mōda-mahimāyatana, mugdha-madhu-mathana, mānada, amānī.
 madanamardana, madātīta, māyārahita, maṅju mānātha, pāthōjapānī. 6.
 kamala-lōcana, kalākōśa, kōdaṇḍaghara, kōśalādhīśa, kalyāṇarāsī.
 yātudhāna pracura mattakari-kēsari, bhaktamana-puṇya-āraṇyavāsī. 7.
 anagha, advaita, anavadya, avyakta, aja, amita, avikāra, ānandasindhō.
 acala, anikēta, avirala, anāmaya, anārambha, ambhōdanādahana-bandhō. 8.
 dāsatulāsī khēdakhinna, āpanna iha, śōkasampanna, atīśaya sabhītaṁ.
 praṇatapālaka rāma, parama karuṇādhāma, pāhi māmurvipati, durvinītaṁ. 9.

Verse no. 56—Oh Lord Ram! You are the destroyer of demons (symbolizing evil, perversions, cruelty, unrighteousness and sins of all hues). You are an ocean of mercy and compassion. You are an eliminator or remover of such negative qualities as pretensions, deceit, conceit and falsehood. You turn to ashes (burn) all the wicked and evil deeds that a creature does. You are the remover of haughtiness, false pride, vanity, hypocrisy and arrogance. You are the destroyer of wickedness. You are the best amongst those who have restrained their sense organs and practice exemplary self-control. You are the remover of all sorrows, miseries and agonies of the creature. You are the annihilator of all the evil Vasnaas (desires, lust, perversity, attachments) that are formidable and difficult to overcome. (1).

You are decorated (adorned) by a large variety of ornaments, and are endowed with the six divine qualities like Aishwarya etc. (which entitles you to be honoured by the title of a Bhagwan—see verse no. 55/9) which shine like the celestial sun. [The 'ornaments' are a metaphors for the countless divine virtues that the Lord possesses. These adorn him and make him as glorious as the splendorous sun.] You provide liberation and deliverance from the bondage of the world, and can grant freedom from all sorts of fear (that torment all living beings in this world). You are the most exalted Lord of the creation. You are beyond comprehension and grasp of the mind and the intellect. You are adored and worshipped by Lord Shiva, and are the well-wisher of the devotees of Lord Shiva. You are the one who provides freedom to the earth or liberate the earth from the torments of the demons (who represent evil and wickedness)¹, and you are the one who bearers all the mountains². [That is, you are the cosmic force that keeps the earth, with all its colossus and heavy mountains, floating in the void of space without any support; you prevent this earth from collapsing from the weight of the mountains. In metaphoric terms it means that it is Lord Ram who actually bears the burden of the entire creation without openly saying so, because on the face of it, it looks that the burden of the mountains is borne by the earth, whereas the fact is that it is the Lord who bears both the burdens—that of the earth as well as of its colossus mountains!] (2).

Oh bestower of boons! Your body is dark like the rain-bearing cloud. You are the patron Lord of speech (i.e. you are the one who not only enables a creature to say something, but also determine what is said by him). You are the macrocosmic and all-

pervading universal Soul of creation. You are without any attachments and entanglements (i.e. you are free from being involved in this creation though you live in it as its Soul). You reside always (at all times) in the temple (abode) called Vaikunth (heaven). [This refers to Lord Ram's primary cosmic form as Lord Vishnu who lives in the heaven known as Vaikunth.]

You are all-pervading, all-encompassing, ubiquitous and omnipresent like the sky. You are worshipped by all in this creation (i.e. both by the mortal living beings as well as the immortal Gods). You had taken the form of the dwarf mendicant known as Vaaman. You are all able and all competent. You are an expert in the knowledge of Brahm (the macrocosmic pure 'Self' known as the cosmic Consciousness, the Supreme Being), and are an embodiment or personification of that Brahm. [That is, you are highly enlightened about your true form, and you know that inspite of assuming a human body you are not an ordinary man but the Supreme Being himself revealed in your divine form.]

You are the one who removes all the worries and miseries that afflict the world and its creatures. (3).

You are naturally and inherently of a sweet nature, and have an attractive countenance (which instills fearlessness and reassurance in the heart of your devotee). You have a pure heart (i.e. you have no deceit and conceit hidden in you). You are eternally and always auspicious, holy and pure. You are all-knowing and omniscient. You are independent and free from having any sort of compulsions of any kind (which may force you to make compromises in connection with your principles and commitments to your devotees). You can do everything in this world (as you are omnipotent and almighty Lord of this creation). You are the one who sustains all, conquers all, and are the benevolent well-wisher of all. You are true to your words and promises (i.e. you are truthful and honest). And you are an annihilator or the concluder of the world (i.e. bring the creation to an end). [This is because you are the Supreme Being, and it is you who decides when to create and when to conclude this world.] (4).

You are eternal and infinite. You are without Moha (any trace of delusions and its attendant attachments, allurements, infatuations and other spiritual anomalies associated with this world). You are formless and attributless. You are most holy, divine and immaculate. You are an embodiment of self-generated bliss. You are both the embodiment as well as the bestower of salvation to the soul. [That is, in your manifested form as Lord Ram you grant emancipation and salvation to the soul of the devotee, but since you are the supreme Soul and the spiritual Truth of this creation it is you who is the ultimate destiny of the individual's soul.]

You are a personification of the virtues of complete bliss and happiness, You are unmovable (stable), without limits (infinite), an embodiment (personification) of salvation, and beyond honour (you transcend such mundane considerations as honour and respect). You are free from all attachments or attractions (that are the normal characteristic quality of all in this creation). And it is you who decides the destiny of all. (5).

You are the root of all greatest of virtues of auspiciousness and holiness. [The word 'root' means that you are a treasury of these virtues as well as the source from which all such qualities draw their strength just like a tree that draws its nourishment through the medium of the root. It is you who help these noble virtues remain established in

this world just like the root that helps the tree to remain firmly anchored to the ground and prevents its toppling over.]

You are an abode of joy, happiness and bliss, as well as of great majesty, magnificence, fame and glory. You are the slayer of the foolish demon Madhu³. You give respect to others, but have no pride, vanity or ego yourself. You are the destroyer of Kamdeo (i.e. of passions, yearning and lust—because Kamdeo is the patron god of these qualities). You are free from the evil qualities of haughtiness, hypocrisy and delusions. You are the Lord of Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity—i.e. you are Lord Vishnu). And you hold a divine lotus in your hand. (6).

Your eyes are like beautiful lotus flower. You are a treasury of the sixty four celebrated qualities known as 'Kalaa'⁴. You hold a bow (in your hand), are the Lord (king) of Kaushal (Ayodhya), and a treasury of auspiciousness. You are like a lion for the purpose of killing numerous demons in the form of wild, haughty and mad elephants. [The 'demons' here are symbols of negative traits such as evil, cruelty, haughtiness, arrogance etc. So just like a lion is easily able to overcome and kill a wild elephant that is bigger in physical size and strength than a lion, you too can easily overcome and eliminate all the formidable and evil forces in creation which are like demons.]

You reside in the pure heart of your devotees which is like forest where this lion lives. (7).

You are without sins, evils or vices of any kind (i.e. you are perfect and immaculate). You are peerless and without a second. You are faultless and without a taint. You are invisible and imperceptible by the sense organs. You are without birth (i.e. you are unborn because you have no beginning as you are eternal and infinite). You are infinite, eternal and limitless. You are flawless and taintless. You are an ocean of happiness and bliss (i.e. you are an infinite source of these virtues). You are unmoving (unwavering, stable), yet you do not reside at only one place—for you are present everywhere as you are omnipresent and all-pervading. You are complete in all respects. You are without disease or any ills (i.e. without the spiritual faults caused by worldly delusions that cause immense torment for the living being just like a disease that also torments him). You are without an end or beginning (as you are infinite, eternal and non-perishable). You are the elder brother of Laxman who is the slayer of Meghnad (who was the son of Ravana, the 10-headed demon king of Lanka). (8).

This Tulsidas is being tormented by the countless miseries and tribulations inflicted upon him by this world; he is surrounded by them; he is overcome by uncountable sorrows and agonies; and has become very distraught and extremely frightened. Oh the care-taker and sustainer of refugees! Oh the abode of the highest quality of mercy and compassion!

Oh Lord Ram, the Lord of the earth! Please protect this evil, miserable, wretched and afflicted one (Tulsidas). [These words show Tulsidas' great humility and modesty, his total surrender before the Lord, his earnestness in seeking the Lord's intervention for redemption of his soul from the miseries created by the world, and his realisation that Lord Ram is the personified form of the Supreme Being.] (9).

[Note—¹Libration of the earth (bhūmi'ud'dharaṇa): During the 1st Yuga (Satyuga), there were two ferocious, most valorous demons called Hiranyakashyapu, the father of Prahalad, and Hirnyaaksha, the father of demon Andhak (see sr. no. 31). The latter

stole the earth and hid it in the subterranean world. Lord Vishnu assumed the form of a wild boar, killed Hiranyaksha and liberated the earth. Besides this, each time the earth is tormented, the Lord manifests to liberate her from her tormentors.

²The lifting of Mt. Gobardhan by Krishna (bhūdharāṇa-dhārī): This alludes to the following episode in the life of Lord Krishna. The inhabitants of Vrindavan stopped offering worship to Indra at the behest of Krishna, the former showed his wrath in the form of torrential, incessant deluge-like rainfall. It rained like cats and dogs for 7 continuous days. Lord Krishna lifted Mt. Gobardhan on his little finger and under its umbrella-like shade, all the inhabitants and their cattle were saved.

³The demon *Madhu*— The Vedas had been stolen by two demons named Madhu and Kaitav, who hid them in the eastern ocean. Lord Vishnu had assumed the form of Hayagriva to kill them and restore the Vedas.

⁴The 16 *Kalaas* are the following virtues—These are the special qualities and attributes etc. that one must possess to make him perfect. They represent his various strengths and potentials, and they are said to be sixteen in number corresponding to and symbolised by the sixteen phases of the moon. Since Lord Ram is a manifestation of the ‘Viraat Purush’, the vast and all-encompassing cosmic form of the Supreme Being, these sixteen qualities or attributes refer to the sixteen qualities of Brahm himself that made him the Lord of creation. The presence of all these divine attributes makes a man complete and very powerful. Hence, these sixteen Kalaas represent all the magnificent good qualities that are present in this creation which enable a man to overcome all adversities, hurdles and ill circumstances. Lord Ram is the creature’s only sincere well-wisher and succour in times of distress and dismay, and he is the Lord who possesses all the exemplary qualities grouped under the single word ‘Kalaa’ that enables him to carry out his duties of sustaining and protecting this creation.

Since the entire creation is a manifestation of the Lord, and the Lord is himself an embodiment of all that exists in this creation, it follows that all the fundamental elements that constitute this creation are represented in the form of Lord Ram.

The sixteen Kalaas are expressly listed in the *Prashna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4. These are the following—(i) Pran (life; life consciousness; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life manifested in the form of the vital winds; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (ii) Shraddha (the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) ‘Prithivi’ (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (the mind and heart complex and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one’s self; the sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause) (xiii) Mantra (the key or formula to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advise; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), (xiv) Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), (xv) Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven

called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and (xvi) Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature; the good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory that a creature has in this world).

They are also called the *sixteen Aakarshini Shaktis* of creation that makes the possessor of these virtues much sought after in society. The word 'Aakarshini' means one that attracts others, and the word 'Shakti' of course means power. These are the following—(i) the power possessed by Pran, the vital life-sustaining winds or airs which maintain the vibrations, the rhythm and the essential functions of life in this creation; (ii) the power that comes with having Shraddha, i.e. having the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect and devotion that one has for his chosen deity, for the Supreme Being, and for the aim of life one has set for himself; (iii) the power to be as vast, all-pervading and all-encompassing as the Sky element known as 'Akash'; (iv) the power that is equivalent to that possessed by the Wind or Air element known as 'Vayu' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of air; (v) the power that is known as 'Tej', literally meaning vigour, vitality, energy, dynamism etc. that are depicted by the Fire element known as 'Agni' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of heat and warmth; (vi) the powers equivalent to those possessed by the Water element known as 'Apaha' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of water; (vii) the powers that are equivalent to the earth element known as 'Prithivi' which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation, the power that helps one to sustain others and therefore it makes a person much sought after; (viii) the powers displayed by the various sense organs of the body, called the 'Indriya', because it is these organs that enable the creature to achieve stupendous and most astounding tasks that are even beyond imagination; (ix) the immense and most lauded power of the mind and sub-conscious known as the 'Mana' which has formidable potentials and reach, keeping the creature firmly held in its grip, and without which power nothing can be done or any success achieved in any field whatsoever; (x) the power equivalent to that possessed by food or 'Anna' which is absolutely essential for survival and has such powerful force of attraction that people go long distances in search of food, even kill each other over it; (xi) the magnificent power to create and generate that is shown by the semen known as the 'Virya' which stands for courage, valour, potency, vitality and strength, vigour, dynamism etc., and anyone who possesses these glorious powers or virtues is surely much attractive and useful for others; (xii) the power that comes with doing 'Tapa', meaning austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance, carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self, sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause, etc., virtues that make the person who possesses them have a magnetic appeal for others; (xiii) the powers inherent in the various mystical 'Mantras' which are great spiritual formulas with astounding potentials to fulfill all desires of the user; they are like keys to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advice; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the mystical powers that are an integral part of the Mantra and represent the various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, the strength, the dynamism and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large; (xiv) the power to do various deeds and take actions, the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks, the powers that are an integral part of the theory of doing Karma; (xv) the powers that makes a man so powerful that he can have control over the various worlds called the three Lokas, i.e. the mortal world where the creatures live on earth, the lower heaven called

the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead ancestors live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the senior Gods live; it also refers to the terrestrial world, the heavens and the nether world, as well as the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness; and finally (xvi) the inherent power in one's good name, the power of 'Naam'; this gives the person fame, acclaim, authority and respect in society; it bestows reputation, honour and glory that a person so much seeks in this world. This power of good name and its value in terms of making the man famous and eternal in the memory of others is so attractive that everyone wishes to gain some good name for himself in this world. A person with good name attracts others towards himself.]

Importance of Saints

(57)

देव—

देहि सतसंग निजअंग श्रीरंग! भवभंग—कारण शरण—शोकहारी ।
 ये तु भवदंघ्रिपल्लव—समाश्रित सदा, भक्तिरत, विगतसंशय, मुरारी ।।1।।
 असुर—सुर, नाग—नर, यक्ष—गंधर्व—खग, रजनिचर, सिद्ध, ये चापि अन्ने ।
 संत—संसर्ग त्रैवर्गपर परमपद, प्राप्य निःप्राप्यगति त्वयि प्रसन्ने ।।2।।
 वृत्र, बलि, बाण, प्रह्लाद, मय, व्याध, गज, गृध्र, द्विजबन्धु निजधर्मत्यागी ।
 साधुपद—सलिल निर्धूत—कल्मष सकल, स्वपच—यवनादि कैवल्य—भागी ।।3।।
 शांत, निरपेक्ष, निर्मम, निरामय, अगुण, शब्दब्रह्मैकपर, ब्रह्मज्ञानी ।
 दक्ष, समद्वक, स्वद्वक, विगत अति स्वपरमति, परमरति विरति तव चक्रपानी ।।4।।
 विश्व—उपकारहित व्यग्रचित सर्वदा, त्यक्तमदमन्यु, कृत पुण्यरासी ।
 यत्र विष्ठन्ति तत्रैव अज शर्व हरि सहित गच्छन्ति क्षीराब्धिवासी ।।5।।
 वेद—पयसिंधु, सुविचार मंदरमहा, अखिल—मुनिवृंद निर्मथनकर्ता ।
 सार सतसंगमुद्घृत्य इति निश्चितं वदति श्रीकृष्ण वैदर्भिभर्ता ।।6।।
 शोक—संदेह, भय—हर्ष, तम—तर्षगण साधु—सद्युक्ति विच्छेदकारी ।
 यथा रघुनाथ—सायक निशाचर—चमू—निचय—निर्दलन—पटु वेग भारी ।।7।।
 यत्र कुत्रापि मम जन्म निजकर्मवश भ्रमत जगज्जोनि संकट अनेकं ।
 तत्र त्वद्वक्ति—सज्जन, समागम, सदा भवतु मे राम विश्राममेकं ।।8।।
 प्रबल भव—जनित त्रैव्याधि—भैषज भगति, भक्त भैषज्यमद्वैतदरसी ।
 संत—भगवंत अंतर निरंतर नहीं, किमपि मति मलिन कह दासतुलसी ।।9।।

(57)

dēva-

dēhi satasaṅga nija'aṅga śrīraṅga! bhavabhaṅga-kāraṇa śaraṇa-śōkahārī.
 yē tu bhavadāṅghripallava-samāśrita sadā, bhaktirata, vigatasaṁśaya, murārī.

1.

asura-sura, nāga-nara, yakṣa-gandharva-khaga, rajanicara, sid'dha, yē cāpi
 annē.

santa-sansarga traivargapara paramapada, prāpya niḥprāpyagati tvayi prasannē. 2.
 vr̥tra, bali, bāṇa, prahalāda, maya, vyādha, gaja, gr̥dhra, dvijabandhu nijadharmatyāgī.
 sādhipada-salila nirdhūta-kalmaṣa sakala, śvapaca-yavanādi kaivalya-bhāgī. 3.
 śānta, nirapēkṣa, nirmama, nirāmaya, aguṇa, śabdabrahmaikapara, brahmajñānī.
 dakṣa, samaddaka, svaddaka, vigata ati svaparamati, paramarati virati tava cakrapānī. 4.
 viśva-upakārahita vyagracita sarvadā, tyaktamadaman'yu, kṛta puṇyarāsī. yatra viṣṭhanti tatraiva aja śarva hari sahita gacchanti kṣīrābdhivāsī. 5.
 vēda-payasindhu, suvicāra mandaramahā, akhila-munivṛnda nirmathanakartā. sāra satasaṅgamudghṛtya iti niścitaṁ vadati śrīkr̥ṣṇa vaidarbhibhartā. 6.
 śōka-sandēha, bhaya-harṣa, tama-tarṣagaṇa sādhu-sadyukti vicchēdakārī. yathā raghunātha-sāyakaniśācara-camū-nicaya-nirdalana-paṭu vēga bhārī. 7.
 yatra kutrāpi mama janma nijakarmavaśa bhramata jagajōni saṅkaṭa anēkaṁ. tatra tvaōkti-sajjana, samāgama, sadā bhavatu mē rāma viśrāmamēkaṁ. 8.
 prabala bhava-janita traivyādhi-bhaiṣaja bhagati, bhakta bhaiṣajyamadvaitadarasī.
 santa-bhagavanta antara nirantara nahīm, kimapi mati malina kaha dāsatusī. 9.

Verse no. 57—Oh Sri-Ranga (Lord Ram)¹! Give me the privilege of having communion with saints and motivate me to attend gatherings where saints and holy people discuss topics related to spiritualism and the Lord God² because it is one of the main paths (means) to attain (reach, realise) you, the Divine Being and the Lord of creation, because it is the destroyer of the cycle of transmigration (birth and re-birth), and because it is the remover of the sorrows of those who take refuge in this path to seek solace and succour for themselves in this world of sorrows and miseries.

Oh Murari³! [“Murari” is an address for Lord Krishna.] Those who are always involved in your devotion and service, and are dependent on the grace of your holy feet which are like the petals or leaves of lotus flower (i.e. they rely solely upon you as their protector because they have taken refuge at your feet)—such persons have their ignorance-induced doubts destroyed or eliminated for good. (1).

The demons, gods, serpents, men, Yakshas (a form of demi-god in a Spirit form believed to be generally residing on the banayan tree), Gandharvas (celestial musicians), birds, Siddhas (those with mystical powers) and all other living beings (i.e. everyone) can attain that eternal and most exalted spiritual stature (of emancipation and salvation) by the simple method of having communion with saints who (i.e. whose mind and heart) remain ever engrossed in your thoughts and who are always devoted to you. This exalted stature is very high, great and rare to achieve, and it is superior to the three rewards of ‘Artha’, ‘Dharma’ and ‘Kaam’ that one gets for all his meritorious deeds in this world. [“Artha” = financial well-being; “Dharma” = fame for diligently following the correct and auspicious path of righteousness; and “Kaam” = fulfilment of all desires.] (2).

Vrittasur⁴, Bali⁵, Vanasur⁶, Prahalad⁷, the demon Mai⁸, the hunter (Valmiki)⁹, the elephant king Gajendra¹⁰, the vulture Jatayu¹¹, the Brahmin Ajamil¹² (who had fallen from his high status in society due to his misdeeds), Chandals (those who live near cremation grounds and perform last rites of dead persons; considered out-castes), Yavans (non-believers, savages, uncivilised people) etc.—all of them were able to wash their sins by the symbolic water used to wash the feet of saints (i.e. by serving saints and obeying their advice). As a reward, all of them had become eligible for attainment of the exalted status of auspiciousness and spiritual well-being as a blessing of their having taken refuge with the saints. [That is, even highly sinful persons who had no hope of ever attaining spiritual peace, or of attaining liberation and deliverance from the negative affects their sins, had actually obtained emancipation by serving the holy feet of saints and obtaining their grace and blessings.] (3).

[In the following stanza no. 4, and in the subsequent stanza no. 5, Tulsidas describes the glories of enlightened saints, and their unique characters and virtues.] {Stanza no. 4:--}

(i) They (saints) are peaceful, placid and tranquil because all desires have left their mind (i.e. they have conquered desires).

(ii) They are neutral (i.e. are detached and dispassionate towards the world; they practice equanimity and evenness of attitude) because they do not have any need or desire for any substance or material thing of this world, and neither do they expect any favour or favourable circumstance that would give them pleasure and comfort. [Therefore, they need not pamper or favour anyone. They treat everything alike, and since they have no needs or desires for worldly things and comforts, they accept whatever comes their way. This helps them to be even in mind and remain calm under varying circumstances. They face adversities and favourable circumstances with stoicism. They treat their enemies and friends alike; they therefore have no enemies or friends. Bodily sufferings or comforts are the same for them.]

(iii) They are free from 'Mamta'. [That is, they are without worldly attachments. They have no longing or infatuation for anything in this world.]

(iv) They have no titles or honours, and neither do they expect them. [This is because they have no 'desires' and prefer to practice detachment, neutrality, equanimity and renunciation.]

(v) They are without any trace of having any bias for and against anything. They are therefore neutral and beyond the effect of the three Gunas¹³. [That is, the three basic qualities of Satvic, Rajasic, Tamasic Gunas have no affect on them. They remain calm and neutral under all circumstances.]

(vi) They are well-versed and enlightened about the supreme Consciousness known as 'Shabda Brahm' represented by the cosmic word 'OM'¹⁴. [This is known as OMKAR or Pranav Brahm as envisioned in the Vedas and other ancient scriptures. This refers to the sound generated by the cosmic Consciousness that pervades throughout the creation, and from which this visible creation is said to have emerged.]

Therefore, they are said to be 'Brahm-Gyaani' or 'Brahm-realised'. That is, they are enlightened about the truth of existence in the form of the cosmic Consciousness that produces vibrations of life in this creation. Ancient scriptures have visualised this vibration of Consciousness in the form of a 'Cosmic Sound' that is equivalent to the sound made when one utters the word OM or AUM. There are umpteen numbers of Upanishads that deal with this topic.^{14]}

(vii) They are fully aware of the ultimate spiritual goal that one is expected to reach when the soul has had the privilege of assuming a human body. [And this goal is to attain final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for one's own self, and at the same time show the correct path to others not so enlightened. A saint is supposed to act as a moral guide and a beacon of hope for the rest of the world. He is expected to teach others the correct way to live by example rather than by precept. They are skilled in carrying out the deeds/duties for which the soul gets a human body]

(viii) They are equitable in their thoughts, views and demeanours, treating everything evenly with an attitude of equanimity.

(ix) Being Brahm-realised and enlightened, they are aware of the nature of their True-self. [That is, they are 'self-realised' and understand that their true self is the pure conscious Atma, the soul, and not the physical body consisting of gross organs. They also know that this Atma is eternal as compared to the body which is mortal.]

(x) They do not distinguish between any two persons, nor as they being different from their own selves. [This is a proof of their being neutral, detached, dispassionate, equitable, self-realised and enlightened about the Truth of existence. They know that the 'Atma' or the soul is the true identity of any living being. The physical body is only a habitat of the Atma. This Atma is pure consciousness and a universal, constant entity. It is the same in all living beings. Therefore, there is no reason why one must distinguish between two creatures with different external bodies. Hence, a true saint treats everyone as he would treat himself.]

(xi) Oh Lord Chakrapaani (*cakrapānī*)! [This refers to Lord Vishnu who holds a "Chakra", a discus, in his hand. Hence, Tulsidas once again reiterates that he is addressing Lord Ram as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.] Such an exalted saint treats everything as belonging to his Lord Ram. He has distanced himself from either enjoying any of the worldly pleasures and comforts, or being affected by the sorrows and pains of the world. [This is obvious because he treats everything in this material world as belonging to Lord Ram, and therefore he has no right to enjoy them. And secondly, having inculcated all the virtues mentioned herein above, he has developed an exemplary sense of neutrality and renunciation from the world.]

(xii) Oh Lord, such a saint is a great devotee of yours; he is an ardent follower of you, and he has immense affection for you who are the Supreme Being (in a human form). (4)

{Elaborating further on the grand virtues of saints, Tulsidas continues as follows in this stanza no. 5—}

(i) The exalted saints are always concerned about the welfare of the world. [They harbour no grudges against anyone, and hope that all living beings live happily and peacefully.]

(ii) On the one hand they have abandoned (or have conquered) such negative things as 'Mada' and 'Krodha' (pride, vanity and anger), and on the other hand they have earned for themselves a great treasury in the form of 'Punya' (meritorious deeds and their spiritual rewards that are obtained by the virtue of following the auspicious path of righteousness, probity, nobility, morality, scrupulousness, goodness and proper conduct—or the path of 'Dharma').

Verily, wherever such exalted saints reside, the most exalted gods of the Trinity, such as the creator Brahma, the concluder Shiva, and the sustainer Hari (Vishnu) who lives on the surface of the celestial ocean known as the 'Ksir-Sagar', come rushing to that place. [It means that such saints have become so holy and divine

that whereas the rest of the world, including the gods, seek the blessing of the Trinity Gods and consider it very auspicious to go the abode where these three Gods live, the latter on the other hand regard saints more holy and divine than themselves. When the three Gods of the Trinity wish to seek blessings, they go to where the saints reside. This statement also means that saints are higher in the hierarchy of exalted Beings so much so that even the greatest of gods such as Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu have no hesitation in coming down from heaven to meet them. It also implies that all the gods in creation are at the beck-and-call of saints; they attend upon the saints; they pay their respects to saints. Therefore, if the great gods pay their respects to saints then obviously the latter are more honourable and reverential than the gods themselves. Hence, if one gets the blessings of saints, the gods are bound to bless such a person.] (5).

[In the following stanza nos. 6-7, Tulsidas highlights the importance of saints and their company with the help of similes. In stanza no. 6, the metaphor of the churning of the ocean is used, and in stanza no. 7 the destruction of the demon army by the arrows shot by Lord Ram is employed.]

The Vedas are like the celestial ocean (i.e. they are immense, vast, fathomless and auspicious like the abode of the Lord Vishnu himself); understanding them and their proper and correct interpretation is the Mandrachal mountain (i.e. understanding the Vedas properly and correctly is a huge and difficult task); all the community of hermits, sages, saints etc. are the ones who churn this ocean (i.e. they study and interpret the Vedas); and as a result of this exercise the Amrit (the elixir or ambrosia of eternal spiritual peace) in the form of Satsang (communion of saints where the glories of the Lord are sung) was produced. This has been declared by Sri Krishna who is the husband of Rukmani. [This story of the churning of the ocean to produce Amrit is described in the Purans. Here it has been invoked to emphasise that company of saints provides the same spiritual benefits very conveniently that one would get by studying hard and correctly understanding the huge tomes of scriptural texts which is a very cumbersome and tedious job. This is because saints distill the knowledge of the scriptures and make this knowledge easily understandable for the common man. They not only explain the principles and concepts with examples, but they show how to live a life of spirituality in practice by living it themselves.] (6).

The methods, skills, reasonings and tacts adopted or employed by the saints are so truthful, simple and straightforward that are able to eliminate all sorts of doubts and spiritual fears that haunt a seeker. Their advice and preaching helps one to overcome all fear, sorrows and ignorance. They help one to maintain poise in the ups and downs of emotions such as moments of (false) joy and moments of (imaginary) sorrows. In fact, the company of saints help one to eliminate all spiritual hurdles in the same way as the powerful arrows of Lord Ram had destroyed all the demons (in the battle-field of Lanka). (7).

Oh Sri Ram! I request you to please bless me that wherever and in whatever form I might take birth due to my deeds and their effects, I pray to you that I should be blessed with having devotion for you, and also of having contact with saints (for that would ensure my well-being). Oh Lord Sri Ram! This is my only hope, my only refuge, my only shelter and my only succour. [That is, I am a most humble person who has not done any 'Punya' or meritorious deed. Neither am I a learned man, or a Brahm-realised and enlightenend man. The only way I can ensure my good and well-

being is to have company of saints, and of course having devotion for you, Lord Ram. I pray to you, oh Lord, to grant me these two things at least.] (8).

Your devotion and veneration is the only remedy that can cure and help one to tide over the horrors of the three types of tormenting diseases¹⁵ created by this mortal world. And the doctor who can prescribe this medicine is a devotee of yours (i.e. a saint) who sees ‘non-duality’ in this creation.

[The ‘three types of horrors associated with this world’ are Adhi-daivic, Adhi-bhautic, and Adhyatmic. Every creature suffers from them. The only way to overcome this fear and override these horrors themselves is to have company of saints where one comes to learn many spiritual truths that help him to ally his fears. Ghosts are seen in darkness, and not in light. Likewise, a person suffers from these imaginary horrors because he is unaware of the reality and truth. Once he comes to know them, all fears vanish. And what is this ‘truth’? Put simply it is that the body of the creature which suffers from all ailments is destined to perish as it is mortal from the very beginning. The body is not the ‘true self’. The Atma which is pure consciousness is this ‘true self’, and this Atma is a universal, non-dual and eternal entity. This Atma is a personified form of ‘Consciousness’ known as Brahm that lives as an individual creature. A saint knows this, and his company enlightens a person about these facts. This knowledge is like the light that helps one to get over his spiritual fears like one feels free from fear of ghosts once one opens the window and lets the sunlight come inside the room.

Refer to a note appended at the end of this verse, marked with the sign #]

In fact I, Tulsidas, though most humble and ill-witted { *mati malina* }, have always asserted this fact of ‘non-duality’ in the sense that there is no difference or distinction between saints and Lord God { *santa-bhagavanta antara nirantara nahīm* }. [Here, Tulsidas has likened saints to Lord God. Refer stanza no. 5 herein above where it is said that the Gods of the Trinity come rushing to the place where saints reside.] (9).

[Note—¹Sri Ranga (*śrīraṅga*): This term is used to indicate Lord Vishnu who is the divine husband of goddess Laxmi, or ‘Sri’, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, hence this term is applied to him to clearly indicate that Tulsidas refers to the Lord of the world while he offers his prayers in Vinai Patrika, and not to the ‘son of kind Dasrath of Ayodhya’.

²The glory, virtues and importance of saints and pious souls have been narrated by Tulsidas elsewhere also. Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Doha no. 41; (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 375—378, 381; and (iii) Vairagya Sandipani, verse nos. 8-42.

³Murari (*murārī*): This shows that Tulsidas saw no distinction between the two forms of Lord Vishnu, Lord Ram, his beloved Lord who was the king of Ayodhya and who killed the demon Ravana of Lanka in the epic war, and Lord Krishna who lived in Vrindavan, killed the demonic king Kansha, and had played a pivotal role in the war of Mahabharata.

⁴Demon Vrittasur: Demon Vrittasur though having an evil body of a demon, was at heart a great devotee of the Lord and an enlightened soul. During the battle with Indra, his enunciations on devotion and wisdom are worth their weight in gold. (This episode appears in Bhagwat Mahapurāṇ). To kill him, the God asked sage Dadhichi

to give his bones which were used to mould the Bajra (thunderbolt; the weapon of Indra), and it was used to kill him.

⁵Bali: The story of king Bali appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 8/15-23. It relates to the Vaaman (dwarf mendicant) incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. Bali was a grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh (half man and half lion) earlier.

King Bali was very righteous and powerful; he chased away Indra, the promiscuous and lustful king of Gods, from the throne of heaven, and conquered it. He performed a thousand Ashwamedha Yagya (horse sacrifice) during the course of which he had conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, of his heavenly powers. Aditi, the mother of Gods, was peeved, and she requested her husband, sage Kashyap, to find a way out. Kashyap advised her to pray to Lord Vishnu. Aditi did severe penance for twelve days at the end of which Vishnu appeared before her and asked how he could help her. When Aditi told him the problem, Vishnu promised that he will take birth as her son in the form of a 'Vaaman' (a dwarf Brahmin) and retrieve the earth and the kingdom of heaven from Bali's dominion.

Once he heard that king Bali was performing a great fire sacrifice, something Bali used to do routinely, and during which he had declared that he will give anything asked for, again something for which he was renowned. This religious sacrifice was being conducted on the banks of river Narmada. Seizing this opportunity, Vishnu in the form of a Vaaman approached Bali who welcomed him and paid his due respects. Then Bali asked Vaaman to ask for some gift or donation as this was the traditional practice during such great religious sacrifices. Vaaman was waiting for this chance. First he made Bali repeat his vows in public, and then asked for land measuring his three steps.

Bali was dumbfounded—he wondered at the inconsequential dimension of the land covered by three tiny steps of this dwarf! Bali requested Vishnu to ask for something more, but Vishnu was adamant. Bali's priest, sage Shukracharya, knew that this dwarf was no one else but Vishnu, and so he tried to persuade Bali to abstain from making such commitment off-hand, because he will lose his entire kingdom. But Bali refused, saying that being the grandson of Prahalad, he cannot rescind on his words that he will give this Brahmin dwarf whatever he asks, even if it means sufferance.

Shukracharya was annoyed at this disobedience, but Vishnu was extremely pleased, and the Lord decided that after fulfilling the promise made to the Gods he will instantly reward Bali in ample terms, and will himself serve him! What a wonderful grace Vishnu shows.

So it happened that Vishnu, in the form of Vaaman, assumed a colossal form of cosmic proportions. The Lord measured the entire earth that Bali ruled in his first step. In the second step Vishnu measured the whole heaven. Nothing was left for the third step—so Bali offered his head! Vishnu was extremely pleased, and being the Lord of the world, he decided that since Bali has offered his own self to him like a faithful devotee, he will fully reward him. Hence, Vishnu blessed Bali that he will go down in history as the greatest donor and righteous of all times, that he will become Indra, the king of Gods, and rule over the heavens during the celestial era known as Saawarni Manvantar, that till that time he shall become the king of the nether world where demons would live, and to add icing to the cake the Lord declared that he himself will become his gatekeeper, and anybody who dared oppose him would be punished by the Lord himself!

⁶Demon Vanasur: Vanasur was the son of king Bali (for whom Lord Vishnu manifested as the dwarf mendicant Vaaman). He had 1000 arms and was an ardent devotee of Shiva. His daughter named Usha had a dream in which she saw Sri

Krishna's grandson Anirudha, who was very handsome. Enamoured by him, Usha took the help of her favourite maid and companion Chitrlekha to smuggle Anirudha into her private palace. When her father Vanasur came to know of this adultery and trickery, he threw the boy in the prison. This led to a ferocious battle between Krishna and Vanasur, in which Lord Shiva fought on the side of his devotee Vanasur. When all but four of his hands were cut by Krishna, the demon relented, and asked for forgiveness. At the intercession of Shiva on his behalf, Krishna made him fearless. Thereafter, Usha was married to Anirudh. This episode also appears in Bhagwat Puran.

⁷Prahalad: He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. He was the eldest son of the king of demons, named Hiranyakashipu. His mother was Kayaadhu, the daughter of the demon king named Jambhaasur. Both the mother and the son were initiated by sage Narad who had inspired them to become devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The story of Prahalad is narrated in detail in (i) Vishnu Puran, 1/17-20, and (ii) Bhagvata Puran, 7/3-10.

The father, being a demon, was an inveterate opponent of Lord Vishnu, and so naturally he couldn't tolerate his own son worshipping his enemy Lord Vishnu. He tried his best to dissuade Prahalad from being devoted to the Lord, but the son had immense faith in the Lord and would not be deterred by his father's threats and scolding. Hiranyakashipu tried even cruel means to change Prahalad, including an attempt to burn in a raging fire, but the child devotee escaped unscathed. So, finally the demon father decided to kill him personally. Prahalad was tied to a pillar and asked 'Where is your Lord Vishnu? Is he in this pillar also?' The child replied in the affirmative. Then his father swung the sword to kill him, and it was at this instant that Lord Vishnu revealed himself as the famous incarnation known as 'Nrisingh'—the upper half of his body was like a lion and the lower half was like a man. An Upanishad titled 'Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad' of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to this Lord.

Lord Nrisingh snatched the sword and laid the demon father across his laps. He then tore through his abdomen, and yanked out his intestines, thereby killing the demon. He then picked up the child Prahalad on to his laps and lovingly licked and caressed him like a lion does to its cub. But Prahalad prayed to the Lord to provide deliverance to the soul of his father, at which the Lord liberated the demon from all his sins.

Prahalad is credited with enumerating the nine-fold path of Bhakti, the path of devotion for the Lord, in the epic Bhaagvata, 7/5/23.

Lord Dattatreya, one of the manifestations of Lord Vishnu, had preached Prahalad about the eclectic state of Avadhut Sanyasi in the form of a huge python, known as Ajgara. Prahalad had spiritual discussions also with other sages such as Hansa (the divine Swan, an incarnation of Vishnu), and with Indra (the king of Gods).

Prahalad had four brothers, three sons and a daughter. The king of demons known as Bali, who was famous for his charities and donations, was a grandson of Prahalad. The incarnations of Vishnu as Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant, is related to this legendary king.

Refer also to: verse no. 93.

⁸Demon Mai: Demon Mai was not a warrior or cruel demon. He was a great architect and town planner. He was the chief architect, planner and developer of Lanka of Ravana and Indraprastha of Kauravs. He was devotee of the Lord God. The fact that Mai had constructed Lanka for the demon king Ravana has been expressly mentioned by Tulsidas in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupi line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 178.

⁹Valmiki: Sage Valmiki is well known for his classical work known as the famous epic 'Ramayana', which is his magnum opus. He is also credited with penning Advhut Ramayan in which Sita had assumed the form of Maha Kali to kill the Ravana with a thousand heads.

Valmiki is said to be the son of sage Pracheta who is said to be the son of Varun, the Water God. He is also said to be one of the Prajaapatis—the ancient patriarchs of this world.

According to Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 57-58 he was a Brahmin by birth but became a robber and adopted their means of livelihood because he was brought up by robbers. Once the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-Rishis went through the forest where he lived, and Valmiki accosted them. When asked by the sages why he robbed others, Valmiki replied that he did it to feed his family and other dependants. The sages advised him that they would not share the consequences of sins that he is committing for them. To test the correctness of this advice, Valmiki tied them to a tree and went to his house to ask his kith and kin if they would share any misfortune that might befall upon him. When they replied that they are only concerned with what loot he brings home, Valmiki's eyes of wisdom opened instantaneously. He rushed back to the sages, untied them and fell at their feet seeking forgiveness. He asked them to show him the path by which he can seek redemption and salvation for himself. The sages then advised him to do Japa (repetition) with Lord Ram's holy Name 'RAM'. Valmiki said that he was so sinful that it is not possible for him to utter the Lord's holy Name. At this, the sages thought over the matter and told him to repeat the name in the reverse order—as 'MARA'. When this word MARA is repeated it becomes RAM. This trick worked fine for Valmiki, and he immediately sat down to do Tapa (severe form of penance) and meditated on the name of the Lord in the reverse order. He became so immobile and lost in contemplation that a mound of anthill formed around his body. It so happened that when the sages returned to the same place during their return journey, they saw him in this condition. They poured consecrated water on him and revived him. It was then that they gave him a new name 'Valmiki', which means 'one who has emerged from an anthill'. This story is narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, 6/57-58.

He established a hermitage on the banks of river Tamsa and lived there. Lord Ram went to meet him during his outward journey to the forest, and it was in the sage's hermitage that Sita lived and her two sons Lav and Kush were born when she was sent to exile by Ram during the final days of the Lord's days on earth as a prelude to his winding up his worldly 'Leela' or deeds and ascending to the heaven as Lord Vishnu.

One day Valmiki saw a hunter shoot down a male bird and heard the wailings of his companion, the female bird. He cursed the hunter in a verse that came out of his mouth in a poetic style called the Anushtup Chand (metre). Never before had Valmiki ever composed any verse, so he was astonished at this development. Then Brahma the creator appeared before him and ordered him to compose the epic Ramayan for which the basic story was provided to him by sage Narad.

The genesis of the story of Ramayan is this—Once the celestial sage Narad came to his hermitage (called an Ashram) on the behest of Brahma. Valmiki asked him if there was anyone living in this creation who embodied all the 16 Kalaas (qualities) that the Supreme Being is known to possess. Then Narad told him about Lord Ram. This is how the grand and magnificent story of the Ramayan was revealed.

Refer also to: verse nos. 94, 112, 151 and others in this book Vinai Patrika in respect of sage Valmiki being cited as an instance of how Lord Ram's divine name and his glory is able to provide liberation for those who had been sinful in their lives and had no hope of deliverance from this bondage.

¹⁰Gajendra: In the ancient country of Dravid (the present day South India), there was a kingdom called Pandyaraaj whose king was named Indradumna. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to offer regular worship to the Lord with great diligence. Once, sage Agastya passed that way with his retinue of disciples. The king was so engrossed in the worship of the Lord that he did not notice the sage and neither did he get up to welcome him or pay his obeisance to him. This annoyed the sage and he cursed—‘You are like a haughty and wild elephant who pays no heed to those standing in the front. Therefore, you deserve to become an elephant—so you would take a birth as an elephant.’ When the king died he became an elephant in a pleasant island in the middle of the Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk.

He had a majestic body and was very strong in his herd. Once he was playing with his she-elephants and companions in a large and beautiful pond. In this pond lived an alligator/crocodile who was actually a Gandharva (a semi-god) named Huhu in his previous life and had become an alligator due to a curse of sage Deval. The alligator /crocodile caught hold of the leg of the elephant and started pulling him inside the deep lake. The Gaja himself and all his companions tried their best but failed to free him from the mouth of the alligator. A long tussle followed and the elephant became completely exhausted. When the situation became so bad that the Gaja, the elephant, was about to sink fully inside the water, he broke a lotus flower and offered it to Lord Vishnu as his last worship and offering before dying. The merciful Lord rushed instantly astride his mount, called the Garud, to save him. Reaching the spot within a moment, the Lord pulled the Gaja out of the water with one hand, and with the other he opened the mouth of the alligator to yank the leg of the elephant free from its clutches. Then the Lord cut off the alligator’s head with his circular weapon known as the Chakra.

Both the alligator/crocodile and the elephant found liberation—the alligator/crocodile reverted to his earlier form of a Gandharva, and Gaja the elephant assumed a divine form similar to that of the Lord and went to his abode in the heaven.

Refer also to: verse nos. 93, 94 and countless other verses of this book Vinai Patrika where Gaja has been cited as an instance when Lord Ram had shown his grace and extended his protection to the humblest and the meekest of creatures when they had called out to the Lord in distress.

¹¹Jataau/Jatau: Jatau was a vulture by birth but a great devotee of Lord Ram. When Ravana was rushing towards Lanka on his chariot with Sita as captive, it was Jatau who had fought fiercely with him in an attempt to rescue Sita from the demon’s clutches. But ultimately Ravana had cut off his wings, and so the unfortunate Jatau fell down on the ground, mortally wounded. He kept repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and managed to hold on to his life till the time the Lord came there in his search of Sita. Jatau told the Lord about Ravana stealing Sita and proceeding towards Lanka in the south direction. Then Jatau left his mortal coil while Lord Ram held him in his arms, caressing him and wiping his wounds with his own hands and using the plaits of his long hairs. When Jatau died, the Lord did his last rites himself—a privilege that no one else except one other character, i.e. Sabari, had got in the whole story of the Ramayana. Even Dasrath, who was the worldly father of the Lord, was denied this honour when he died at Ayodhya after the Lord was sent to exile in the forest because at that time only Bharat and Shatrughan were present in the city, and so his last rites were performed by Bharat. This episode is narrated in all the versions of the Ramayana, e.g. in the Ram Charit Manas of Tulsidas, in its Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29 right upto Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33.

It ought to be noted here that prior to this, Lord Ram has met Jatau earlier in the forest and befriended him. Jatau was a friend of Dasrath, and he had assured the Lord that he will stay in close proximity with them (Ram, Sita and Laxman) in the forest to keep a vigilant eye and give them protection to the best of his might—this is narrated

in the Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-7. This fact is also endorsed by Tulsidas in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 12, stanza no. 2.

The glorious way that Jatau died has been lauded and applauded by Tulsidas in Dohawali verse nos. 222-227. Refer also to Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 12-16.

“Lord Ram lifted Jatau onto his lap and washed his wounds with the tears streaming from his (Ram’s) eyes”—this is said in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 13, stanza no. 1, while Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 30 says that “the Lord moved his loving hand carrassingly on his head”.

Jatau’s special death which made him a subject of jealousy and envy for all other exalted persons as narrated in the Doha above has one unique aspect—inspite of him being a vulture by birth and body, he was given an honour befitting a father by none else than the Supreme Being (Lord Ram) himself when the Lord performed his last rites himself—refer: (i) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no. 4; verse no. 14, stanza no. 1; (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 32; (iii) Kavitali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 16, line no. 3; (iv) Doha no. 227 of Dohawali; (v) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 164, stanza no. 2; verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1.

Vinai Patrika, verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1 says that Lord Ram offered a ‘Pinda’, a ball of cereals that is offered to the soul of one’s departed parent, to Jatau after the bird left its physical body.

Doha no. 227 of Dohawali clearly says “Lord Sri Ram, who is an ocean of graciousness and mercy, performed the last rites of Jatau with a devotion and fervour which was ten times more than what he had for his own father Dasrath, and having done so, he, along with his brother Laxman, gravely mourned his (Jatau’s) death.”

The remarkable thing is that Lord Ram has called Jatau ‘his father’ in clear terms in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 15, stanza no. 1 when the Lord requests Jatau to live a little longer for some more days so that he (Ram) can enjoy his company as a father and becomes privileged to receive his blessings as a son gets from his father. Dohawali’s Doha no. 233 says—“Upon hearing the news of how Jatau, the king of vultures, had died, the great ascetics, the Karmayogis (those who do their duties in a righteous manner), the devotees, the wise-men, the sages, the mystics, the hermits, the higher and lower borns, et al—in short, all living beings became jealous of him on the one hand, and praised him and applauded him for the auspicious death he got.”

When people came to know how Jatau had died while being caressed by Lord Ram as he lay cradled in the Lord’s arms, and how the Lord had himself performed his last rites, they all praised Jatau and wished that they too could die the same way. They all became convinced that of all the living beings on earth, no one was as fortunate and lucky as Jatau—because all those who have taken a birth must die, but it’s rarer than the rarest occasion when the Supreme Being himself comes down walking upto a dying man to move his divine hands on his head, to cradle the dying man in his arms, and to do his last rites with his own hands. Their becoming ‘jealous’ is a figure of speech to emphasise how much they envied Jatau because envy is a sort of praise and honour. One becomes envious of another person only when the latter has something that is highly praiseworthy and valuable, and which the other person who is jealous does not have nor expects to have any time in the future.

Jealousy and envy is an indirect way of immense praise. One is not jealous of an evil character in a person, because such character is denounced by the society. One is jealous and envious of a person only if he possesses some noble virtue or skill or asset for which the world lauds him and applauds him.

Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 13, stanza no. 4 explicitly says that when Lord Ram asked Jatau that if he wished to live then the Lord can grant him a longer life, Jatau had replied—“Lord, well, tell me one thing—to be in the presence of the Supreme Lord at the time of death is most difficult even for great ascetics and sages to achieve, and this magnificent opportunity has come to me out of its own free will.

Where will I get it again? I will not be cheated of this golden chance by bargaining it for a life that is nonetheless transient, mortal, false, deluding and decayable. Therefore, I do not wish to live any longer!”

Then again, in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 15, stanza no. 4, Jatau says—“Oh Lord, believe me. My death is so honourable and desirable that not even the four commendable noble fruits that the scriptures say one gets by living a life of full auspiciousness and righteousness (i.e. the rewards of Artha—worldly prosperity and well-being, Dharma—honour that comes with being rightful and righteous), Kaam—fulfilment of all desires, and Moksha—spiritual liberation and deliverance) can ever compare with it. Tell me, is there any such other honourable and divine reward more desirable than the way I am dying?” Lord Ram was left speechless, for he had no answer to this question!

What other factor, besides the fact that Jatau died in the arms of the Supreme Being, made his death so desirable and laudable? He had died in a selfless manner serving the Lord in trying to protect Sita, Lord Ram’s honourable wife, from the clutches of the demon Ravana who had abducted her and was taking her away to his city of Lanka. ‘Selfless service’ is one of the greatest deeds for a person to do, and this single action of Jatau made him perfectly eligible for immediate deliverance upon death. In other words, if one dies doing selfless service, and offers his services to the Lord God while actually undertaking the exercise, then his emancipation and salvation is a surety. Such a creature is praised by all the saints and sages—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 84.

In Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 27, Angad praised Jatau when he said—“There is no one more praiseworthy and honourable than Jatau in this world. He is most adorable because he had left his mortal body in the selfless service of Lord Ram, and had gone to the divine abode of Lord Hari (Vishnu) after death.”

Nothing is in-accessible or un-attainable for a creature who has the good of others in his heart, who thinks for the welfare of others, and who is not selfish—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 31.

Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no. 3 says that “the king of vultures assumed a divine form and went to heaven after bowing at the holy feet of Lord Ram and enshrining the Lord’s beautiful and holy image in his heart even as he heard his own glories and those of the Lord’s being sung all around in the world”.

Doha no. 224 of Dohawali says “So many have died till now; so many are dying at present; and so many will die in the future with the passage of time—but till today, and not ever in the future, will anyone get the privilege of dying the way Jatau had died. (224)”

Refer also to: Vinai Patrika’s verse no. 95.

¹²Ajamil or Dwij Bandhu: Dwij Bandhu is another name of Ajamil because he was a Brahmin by birth. But unfortunately he became enamoured with a prostitute and married her. Bad company made him turn into a hunter. One day a group of sages passed by the village. When they asked the villagers if there was a Brahmin’s house where they could spend the night, the villagers told them of Ajamil. So these sages decided to spend the night there. When Ajamil returned from his hunting trip with a catch of a bird and saw the sages, he felt very ashamed. He confided with them that he is a fallen man and that they should not eat in his house. The saints had a merciful heart and they thought amongst themselves that it is their moral obligation to show this man some way by which he can find liberation and deliverance.

They cooked their own meals with whatever they had. The next day, they summoned Ajamil and told him, ‘Look, your wife is pregnant. She will soon deliver a son. Give that son the name ‘Narayan’ (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu). This would lead to your emancipation.’ And then the group of sages went on their journey.

When the son was born, Ajaamil named him as advised by them—he called the son ‘Narayan’. He was very fond of the son, and called out his name ‘Narayan, Narayan’ umpteen numbers of times during the course of the day. He was unwittingly taking the name of Lord Vishnu. This continued till the time came for his death.

When he was tormented by the messengers of Yam, the God of hell and death, he became terrified and called out in fear—‘Narayan, Narayan. Save me’. Though he was calling his son, but the Lord heard his name being called out by someone in distress. So he sent his own messengers to protect the caller. The messengers of Lord chased away the messengers of Yam and took Ajaamil to heaven. When Yam complained to Vishnu, the Lord told him that if anyone calls out his name at the time of death he is duty-bound to liberate and protect him. This story tells us the power of the name of the Lord.

This story is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat, 6/1-2.

¹³The three Gunas: The character of all the living beings in the entire creation is dependent upon three celebrated primary qualities called the Gunas. They are Sata, Raja and Tama.

(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the Sata Guna or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The Raja Guna is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one’s long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It

leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamsic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

The Vasanas that have the Tama Guna in dominance are regarded as the 'bad Vasanas' or better still the 'worst type of Vasana' that any individual can have.

These Gunas, in varying ratios and mixtures, decide the character and personality of any given unit of creation. In modern world we recognize them as the 'gene' special to that individual, the 'gene' which makes each individual so unique in this creation. These Gunas can also be compared to the various shades and hues of colours that a painter uses to paint a picture or a portrait and inject life and uniqueness to it. Even the same painter cannot duplicate exactly a picture again—there is bound to be a difference between any two pictures or portraits no matter how invisible, imperceptible, microscopic and subtle it might be.

The effect of the Gunas and how they affect this creation have been explained in a number of Upanishads. some of the references are these: *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse no. 2 of the Atharva Veda; *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 6, paragraph no. 7; *Shaarirak Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 13; *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Kanda 1, verse no. 9; *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 77; *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Brahman 3, verse no. 1; *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 116.

¹⁴OM and Brahm: There are umpteen numbers of Upanishads that deal with this esoteric subject which is beyond the purview of the present book to be described in detail here. Refer to the following Upanishads—

The eclectic concept of the ethereal sound known as Naad and its conceptualisation as the word Mantra OM has been explained in a number of Upanishads. Some of these Upanishads are the following—

(a) Rig Veda—Naad Bindu Upanishad.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli (Canto) 1, Anuvak (sub-canto) 8; Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 2, 4, 24-25, 31-32; Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 2, 9-18 (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation), 37, 102; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 6; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 136-139; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 2-12, 69-71 ½ (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation); Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11—1.34, and Canto 5, verse nos. 69-72; Shuk-Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 20 (describes how OM is used for the purpose of ritualistic worship according to the Tantra philosophy involving Anga Nyas, Shadanga Nyas etc.); Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 42-43 ½ (describe how the three states of existence, i.e. waking, dreaming and deep sleep, and the three types of bodies, i.e. gross, subtle and causal, came into existence as manifestations of the three letters A, U and M of the word OM); Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 38.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Taarsar Upanishad, Canto 2, and Canto 3, verse nos. 1-7; Hans Upanishad, verse nos. 6-17.

(c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad verse no. 74-81, 85-88; Pranavo Panishad which has only 13 verses dedicated to OM.

(d) Atharva Veda—Sita Upanishad, verse no. 9; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 7; Ram Tapiniopanishad, canto 3, verse no.5-9; Prashna Upanishad, full Canto 5; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 4,6; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 1, 8-12; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8; Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 5; Canto 4, verse no. 3; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 1-7; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 6, verse nos. 1-5; Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, verse no. 6; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 4, 17 (which equates OM with the ‘Hans’ Mantra), 20 (which says that OM is used a Mantra to offer worship or reverence to the Atma); Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 3-5; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 2, 5.

The supreme transcendental Being known as ‘Brahm’ is also known as *Pranav Brahm* or *Shaba Brahm* because the term ‘Brahm’ refers to the cosmic Consciousness that is at the core of this creation, and this ‘Consciousness’ generates ‘vibrations of life’ in the deep bowls of the cosmos, and these vibrations in turn produce a ‘sound’. ‘Sound’ is a characteristic of ‘conscious life’ as only a living entity can ‘speak and utter something’, or produce a sound. In the cosmic context, this sound that was heard is best represented by the sound made by the monosyllabic word OM.

The cosmos is like a colossus bowl, and the sound generated by the Consciousness produced a deep and dense reverberating sound that was called ‘Naad’. The word ‘Naad’ itself means a reverberating sound that is deep and dense and pulsating like the one made by a huge and heavy bell or drum.

The cosmic ‘Consciousness’ vibrated with life, and this created pulses that spread in waves in the cosmic ether much like ripples that spread on the surface of a pond when one throws a stone in it. Since there was nothing to obstruct these vibrations, they spread uniformly throughout this creation, permeating every inch of it.

Now, ancient sages and seers tried to explain this esoteric concept by coining the words ‘Brahm’ and ‘OM’ to represent respectively the ‘cosmic Consciousness’ and the ‘signs of life it produces in the form of vibrations in the cosmic ether that in turn created sound in the cosmos’. Again, since Consciousness and Sound go hand-in-hand, these sages and seers called Brahm as ‘Pranav Brahm’ or ‘Shabda Brahm’. The word ‘Shabda’ means a letter or word. Here, the word ‘Shabda’ refers to the monosyllabic word OM that was deemed to be the nearest analogue to the cosmic sound that was produced by the supreme Consciousness in the cosmic ether. This is because when one says the word OM or AUM slowly, the sound that is produced is equivalent to the sound that is heard in the deep corners of the universe even now.

OM was therefore treated as the nearest analogue and a synonym of Brahm, the supreme Consciousness. Later on the Purans made this abstract idea very easy to comprehend by giving it the name of the Supreme Being: the Brahm, the Parmatma, the Supreme Lord of creation, the Viraat Purush (which literally means the immense dimension of the all-encompassing and all-inclusive form of Brahm).

To access the secret of Brahm, this word OM was given the status of a formula, known as a ‘Mantra’. OM therefore became a ‘name of Brahm’, a synonym of Brahm. OM helped an aspirant seeking to know the truth of Brahm and of existence an easy method to access the latter. In other words, OM was not only a word and a name assigned to Brahm but was also a path that can lead a seeker of truth to the cosmic Consciousness. OM is a Mantra that provides direct access to Brahm and to the cosmic Consciousness that is at the core of creation.

By corollary, the word OM began to represent the cosmic ‘Naad’ as well. And by extension it began to represent Brahm and Consciousness too.

[#]The three great torments in the world are known as ‘Traitaap’: Refer: (i) Rig Veda’s Mudgal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 2; (ii) Atharva Veda’s Sharva Upanishad, verse no. 17.

(a) ‘Adhyatmic’ problems are those that the creature faces in his spiritual pursuits, (b) ‘Adhibhautic’ problems are created by terrestrial creatures like enemies, wild animals, cruel kings, thieves, bodily afflictions such as old age and diseases etc., (c) ‘Adhidaivic’ are the problems created by unfavourable Gods and malignant stars.]

Metaphoric Laṅkā (the City of Demons)

(58)

देव—

देहि अवलंब करकमल, कमलारमन, दमन—दुख, शमन—संताप भारी ।
 अज्ञान—राकेश—ग्रासन विधुंतुद, गर्व—काम—करिमत्त—हरि, दूषणारी ॥1॥
 वपुष ब्रह्माण्ड सुप्रवृत्ति लंका—दुर्ग, रचित मन दनुज मय—रूपधारी ।
 विविध कोशौघ, अति रुचिर मंदिर—निकर, सत्वगुण प्रमुख त्रैकटककारी ॥2॥
 कुणप—अभिमान सागर भयंकर घोर, विपुल अवगाह, दुस्तर अपारं ।
 नक्र—रागादि—संकुल मनोरथ सकल, संग—संकल्प बीची—विकारं ॥3॥
 मोह दशमौलि, तद्भ्रात अहंकार, पाकारिजित काम विश्रामहारी ।
 लोभ अतिकाय, मत्सर महोदर दुष्ट, क्रोध पापिष्ट विबुधांतकारी ॥4॥
 द्वेष दुर्मुख, दंभ खर, अकंपन कपट, दर्प मनुजाद मद—शूलपानी ।
 अमितबल परम दुर्जय निशाचर—निकर सहित षड्वर्ग गो—यातुधानी ॥5॥
 जीव भवदंघ्रि—सेवक विभीषण बसत मध्य दुष्टाटवी ग्रसितचिंता ।
 नियम—यम सकल सुरलोक—लोकेश लंकेश—वश नाथ! अत्यंत भीता ॥6॥
 ज्ञान—अवधेश—गृह गेहिनी भक्ति शुभ, तत्र अवतार भूभार—हर्ता ।
 भक्त—संकष्ट अवलोकि पितु—वाक्य कृत गमन किय गहन वैदेहि—भर्ता ॥7॥
 कैवल्य साधन अखिल भालु मर्कट विपुल ज्ञान—सुग्रीवकृत जलधिसेतू ।
 प्रबल वैराग्य दारुण प्रभंजन—तनय, विषम वन भवनमिव धूमकेतू ॥8॥
 दुष्ट दनुजेश निर्वशकृत दासहित, विश्वदुख—हरण बोधैकरासी ।
 अनुज निज जानकी सहित हरि सर्वदा दासतुलसी हृदय कमलवासी ॥9॥

(58)

dēva-

dēhi avalamba karakamala, kamalāramana, damana-dukha, śamana-santāpa bhārī.

ajñāna-rākēśa-grāsana vidhamutuda, garva-kāma-karimatta-hari, dūṣaṇārī. 1. vapuṣa brahmāṇḍa supravṛtti laṅkā-durga, racita mana danuja maya-rūpadhārī.

vividha kōśaughā, ati rucira mandira-nikara, satvaguṇa pramukha traikaṭakakārī. 2.

kuṇapa-abhimāna sāgara bhayaṅkara ghōra, vipula avagāha, dustara apāraṁ. nakra-rāgādi-saṅkula manōratha sakala, saṅga-saṅkalpa bīcī-vikāraṁ. 3.

mōha daśamauli, tadbhrāta ahamkāra, pākārijita kāma viśrāmahārī.

lōbha atikāya, matsara mahōdara duṣṭa, krōdha pāpiṣṭa vibudhāntakārī. 4.

dvēṣa durmukha, dambha khara, akampana kapaṭa, darpa manuḷāda mada-
śūlapānī.

amītabala parama durjaya niśācara-nikara sahita ṣaḍvarga gō-yātudhānī. 5.

jīva bhava-daṅghri-sēvaka vibhīṣaṇa basata madhya duṣṭāṭavī grasitacintā.

niyama-yama sakala suralōka-lōkēśa laṅkēśa-vaśa nātha! atyanta bhītā. 6.

jñāna-avadhēśa-gr̥ha gēhinī bhakti śubha, tatra avatāra bhūbhāra-hartā.

bhakta-saṅkaṣṭa avalōki pitu-vākya kṛta gamana kiya gahana vaidēhi-bhartā.
7.

kaivalya sādhanā akhila bhālu markāṭa vipulā jñāna-sugrīvākṛta jaladhisētū.

prabala vairāgya dāruṇa prabharjāna-tanaya, viṣama vana bhavanamiva
dhūmakētū. 8.

duṣṭa danujēśa nirvaṅśakṛta dāsahita, viśvadukha-haraṇa bōdhaikarāsī.

anuḷa nija jānakī sahita hari sarvadā dāsatulasī hr̥daya kamalavāsī. 9.

Verse no. 58—Oh the Lord of Kamala (i.e. the divine husband of goddess Laxmi: kamalāramana)¹! Give me the support of your arms as I appear to be drowning in this world-like ocean (that is full of countless miseries and torments), because you are reputed to be the one who can remove all sorts of sorrows, miseries and the greatest of torments. Oh the slayer of demon Dushan²! You are akin to Rahu³ for devouring (eclipsing) the moon of ignorance, and are like a lion to crush (kill) the wild elephants representing pride, vanity, haughtiness and desires. (1).

[Now, the metaphor of Lanka, the city of demons, is used by Tulsidas to describe how the various negative traits that are present in a person and form an integral part of his basic nature and temperament turn him or her into a virtual ‘demon’—an evil, sinful, corrupted, nasty and pervert person; a person who makes the world around him suffer due to him and who suffers himself in the process⁴.]

The various tendencies, inclinations and habits of this body are like the fort of Lanka; the architect Mai-Danav representing the mind has constructed it; the five ‘Koshas’⁵ in it are like the magnificent palaces of Lanka; and the three Gunas (fundamental qualities that every living being has), such as Satguna etc. (the others are Rajasic and Tamasic)⁶, are the chief commanders of its army. (2).

The pride and vanity that one has of one's body (i.e. about the ability, valour, powers and strength of the body; about how robust and handsome the body is; about the many achievements and successes that one has got by this body; in brief, about one's ownself) is like the formidable ocean that is terrible, fathomless, endless and difficult-to-cross. This ocean is filled with crocodiles represented by attachments, enmity, hostility, envy, jealousy and desires; and the waves that heave menacingly in this ocean are symbolized by false allurements that one has and promises that one makes. [The city of Lanka was in the middle of the mighty ocean which was almost impossible to cross. The negative virtues listed here are as unsurmountable and as dangerous as the ocean and the ferocious marine animals that lived in it.] (3).

In this city (of Lanka), ‘Ravana’ (the king of demons) symbolizes the negative trait of Moha (attachments, infatuation, attractions, ignorance, delusions, bewilderments), his brother ‘Kumbhakaraṇa’ represents the negative traits of pride, vanity, hypocrisy, haughtiness, ego etc., and ‘Meghnad’ (Ravana's son) stands for the negative qualities of Kaam (lust, passion, desire) which destroys peace. The demon ‘Atikai’ is greed,

avarice and yearnings, the wicked demon 'Mahodar' is jealousy and anger, the great sinner 'Devantak' is anger, wrath and indignation, the demon 'Durmukh' is envy and jealousy, 'Khar' is ego, false pride, vanity, hypocrisy and heresy, 'Akampan' is deceit, crookedness, fraud, falsehood, treachery and scheming, 'Manujad' is arrogance, pride, vanity and boast, and 'Shulpani' is arrogance, hypocrisy and hallucination. This royal family of demons and its supporters (the other demons) are very strong, brave, valiant and invincible. Accompanying these ignorant, haughty and arrogant demons are their respective demonesses (their female counterparts). [By including the female demons along with the male demons, Tulsidas means that the negative traits mentioned herein above are in full force, with their might on display. They are like a family and help each other. And like a family, they would multiply and produce their off-springs if left unattended. But the problem is that if a person tries to somehow overcome one or two of these evil tendencies in him, the others immediately create nuisance for the person and force him to abandon his plans or efforts to free himself of them. The negative traits that are like the pervert demons have firmly established themselves inside the Jiva, and they work together to defy all attempts to eject them.] (4-5).

Oh Lord (Ram)! 'Vibhishan' (the younger brother of Ravana, but ironically a great devotee of the Lord unlike the rest of the demons), who represents the Jiva (the living being) and who is your ardent servant (follower or devotee), resides in this fearful forest (city) teeming with horrifying demons, always terrified, fearful and worried of his well-being and safety. The ten 'Yams and Niyams'⁷ are represented by the ten Dikpals as well as Indra (the king of gods) who are all subdued by Ravana and are like his serfs. They live in constant terror of Ravana and his ilk. [That is, the Jiva is unable to practice any of the Yams and Niyams because the rest of the negative traits listed in the earlier stanzas constantly harass him and create fear in his mind. The 'Dikpals' are the ten custodians of the ten corners of the world, and 'Indra' represents the different gods as he is their king. Since they are assigned the job of taking proper care of the world and ensure its proper functioning, all the efforts that a Jiva makes as part of observing the principles of Yam and Niyam are likened to these Dikpals and Indra. But ironically, the Jiva is unable to do anything because of the stifling fear of the demonic forces that are dominant in him. See also verse 172.] (6).

So, Oh the beloved of Janki (a reference to Sita; here meaning 'Lord Sri Ram'), please manifest (reveal) yourself through mother 'Kaushalya' representing the grand and noble virtue of devotion, veneration and worship, in the household of 'Dasrath' (the king of Ayodhya) who represents wisdom and true knowledge, for the purpose of destroying these 'demons' representing delusions, ignorance, attachments, infatuations, confusions, bewilderments etc., and come to the 'forest' represented by my Mana (heart and mind) the way you had gone to the forest at your father's command (during your incarnation as Lord Ram).

[This refers to Lord Ram going to the forest for 14 years to uphold the words of his worldly father Dasrath. In the forest, the Lord lived for quite some time where he eliminated a number of demons who had been tormenting sages and hermits living in the forest and pursuing their spiritual quest. Not only this, the Lord had visited many of these great sages to bless them with his divine presence. The Lord had also blessed countless ordinary people who lived in villages and hamlets along the way. Tulsidas has this in mind when he asks Lord Ram to come and stay in the symbolic 'forest of his Mana'. This would make Tulsidas privileged and blessed on the one

hand, and on the other hand it would help his mind and heart (i.e. his Mana) to free themselves of all evil qualities that are firmly entrenched there.] (7).

Oh Lord, in order to reach the symbolic Lanka (to destroy the demons represented by the hoardes of evil traits as narrated in the foregoing stanzas), you should construct a bridge over this delusory world-like ocean with the help of ‘Sugriv’ (the king of the monkey army) representing wisdom, and his companions, the numerous bears and monkeys who represent the different paths to salvation and liberation of the soul.

[That is, you must take the initiative and guide your devotees from the front so that they develop wisdom and the ability to wisely employ the different paths for obtaining liberation and deliverance that have been prescribed by the scriptures so that their main goal, the single objective of attaining emancipation and salvation for their souls, can be achieved. It is like Lord Ram employing so many monkeys with different abilities and skills to attain his single objective—and it was to eliminate the demons. However, while following the different principles and paths as advised by the scriptures, your devotees will always have you to look upon and seek help from as their leader and guide. Oh Lord, be a beacon of hope and solace for all your devotees just as you had led the army of monkeys across the ocean by constructing the bridge and leading them from the front in the war that got rid of the cruel demons. Just like the monkeys needed your leadership, your devotees too need your guidance and leadership for their salvation and emancipation! Just like you had one single goal to eliminate the demons when you launched your offensive on Lanka, in the present case please ensure that your devotees too attain one single goal of life—and it is to attain final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of their souls.]

Once this happens (i.e. once the Jiva develops proper wisdom and the desire to pursue his single spiritual goal of life with a steadfast mind and heart), the most valiant, brave and strong ‘Hanuman’ (the great monkey warrior and one of the greatest devotees of Lord Ram) represented by stern (great, immense degree of strict) renunciation would arrive at Lanka like a ‘Dhumketu’ (a comet) to burn to ashes (i.e. eliminate) the gardens and palaces (of Lanka) representing the different kind of Vasanas (sensual pleasures, lust and passions, a desire for enjoyment of material comforts, and so many other allurements of the world of sense objects) that a Jiva has.

[That is, once the Jiva begins to follow you and develop spiritual wisdom, he will be aided in his spiritual pursuit by observing strict renunciation and vows. Hanuman is a symbol of strict renunciation and vows. It is only when a Jiva is armed with these qualities that he can burn to ashes all sorts of ‘Vasanas’ or passions, lust and yearning. Hanuman is compared to a ‘Dhumketu’ (dhūmakētū) because he had flown into Lanka in the darkness of the night, and appeared like a streak of light in the sky.] (8).

Thereafter, oh Lord Ram who are an eliminator of the sorrows and miseries of the entire world, you should destroy all the wretched and wicked demons who represent the different kinds of spiritual hurdles, and all kinds of other negativities and evil traits that create horrifying sorrows and miseries associated with mudane existence in this world that keep tormenting the Jiva represented by your devotee. [That is, you must ensure that the Jiva represented by your devotee is freed from all the evil traits and problems created by them in his quest for finding peace for himself.]

Oh Lord! Thence, please enshrine your divine self along with your brother (“Anuj”; Laxman) and Janki (Sita) in my lotus-like heart for all times to come (for eternity)⁸. [That is, let my heart be first purged of all the bad emotions and qualities as

enumerated above. After I achieve this by your grace, my heart will be clean like the lotus flower which remains clean inspite of living in a pond with dirty water. Then my heart will be ready to invite you to come and make it your abode. This is because the Lord cannot be invited and seated in the heart that is unclean and corrupted by worldly taints.] (9).

[Note—¹“**Kamalāramana**”: The word has two parts—viz. ‘Kamala’ and ‘Ramana’. ‘Kamala’ refers to goddess Laxmi because she is shown as standing on a lotus flower in iconography. And ‘Ramana’ means one who stays close to and moves side-by-side with someone, usually one’s consort. Hence, the word ‘kamalaramana’ stands for Lord Vishnu who is in a human form as Lord Sri Ram.

Remember: This book ‘Vinai Patrika’ is dedicated to Lord Ram who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

²Dushan—He was a demon who was killed by Lord Ram when he attacked the Lord along with his brother Khar and the commander of the demon army named Trishira. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 20 ka.

³Rahu—The legend has it that Rahu was the eldest son of the demon Viprachitti and his wife Shinghikaa. His younger brothers were Ilvala, Vaataapi, Narak amongst others. When Lord Vishnu, disguised as the beautiful Mohini, was distributing the ambrosia of eternity called Amrit to the Gods during the episode of the churning of the ocean as told in the Purans, Rahu assumed the form of a God and surreptitiously entered the lines of the Gods to take this Amrit. When his cheating was discovered, Vishnu cut-off his head with his weapon called the Chakra Sudarshan (a circular saw-like discus). But it so happened that before the head was severed Rahu had already drunk some Amrit, and so did not die. His head and torso became two independent entities. The former was called ‘Rahu’ and the latter ‘Ketu’.

Since the Moon God and the Sun God had betrayed him, Rahu takes revenge by devouring them periodically to satisfy his hunger. He devours them when they are in their full glory—viz. he devours the Moon God during the full moon night, and the Sun God only during the day time, either when the sun rises or during its journey across the sky, but never at sunset when the sun is already losing its radiance and is on the decline.

Again, since the head of Rahu was severed from the neck, hence both the Moon God and the Sun God re-emerge from the lower end of the head after they have been devoured by the mouth of Rahu. This is why the moon and the sun appear to be getting gradually cut-off from view from one end of their discs, symbolizing their gradually entering the mouth of Rahu as the latter begins to devour them. Then for some time they remain dark or obstructed from view symbolizing the period when they remain inside the mouth of Rahu. Finally, they gradually regain their original shape symbolizing their ejection from the lower end of Rahu’s neck where it was severed from the trunk.

Thus we see that the mythological origin of the solar and lunar eclipse can be traced to this event of the churning of the ocean and the demon Rahu getting his head cut-off because he had cheated Vishnu in an attempt to drink Amrit. But having already drunk this elixir, he could not die; the head became Rahu and the trunk became Ketu (a comet). Because of this enmity, Rahu extracted a boon that he would eat the sun and the moon periodically when he felt hungry, which, according to mythology, he does during the solar and lunar eclipses respectively. The sun or the moon enter his mouth (the beginning of the eclipse), and emerge from his severed throat (marking the end of eclipse).

The elongated torso of Rahu came to known as ‘Ketu’ and it is recognized as the comet in modern science. That is why sighting of the comet is regarded as a bad omen.

Both Rahu and Ketu are placed amongst the nine planets. They represent the two nodal points where the celestial equator cuts the ecliptic.

In iconography, Rahu is depicted as just a head or even as a snake's hood.

The story of Rahu appears in Srimad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Chapter 8, Canto 9.

Refer also to verse no. 87, stanza no. 2.

⁴Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to get rid of all these negativities from inside him just like the Lord had slayed all the evil demons of Lanka so that Tulsidas can regain his peace and overcome all his sorrows and miseries that are generated by the negative traits present in him. Remember: The physical gross body of a Jiva (a living being; a creature) is compared to a city or a dwelling where the 'true self' of the Jiva lives. This 'true self' is the pure conscious Atma or Soul. All the negatives are limited to the body, for the Atma is eternally pure and holy. But since the Atma lives inside the physical body, and the latter becomes its habitat, whatever sort of bad habits and evil tendencies that the body harbours begin to affect the Atma and torment the Jiva. Here, Tulsidas has likened all the negative traits that a person possesses to demons who keep tormenting him and become a cause of his miseries and sorrows.

In the story of the Ramayana, the demons had been wreaking havoc and terror on this earth as well as the heaven from their fort at Lanka. The gods and mother earth had prayed to Lord Vishnu to protect them from the tyranny of the demons, and Vishnu had promised them that he will come down as Lord Ram and get rid of the cruel demons to restore peace in the world. So, Lord Ram began eliminating all the demons one by one on some or other pretext. But the majority of them were in Lanka. So the Lord devised a plan and made it so happen that his own wife Sita would be stolen and held captive at Lanka by the demon king Ravana. There, Sita was subjected to unimaginable horrors and sufferings. Finally, Lord Ram used this as an excuse to attack Lanka and kill all the cruel demons in the war for liberating Sita from their captivity.

The way the demons had been tyrannizing the world and the construction of their golden city of Lanka has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 176—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 184.

It ought to be specially noted here that in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 184, Tulsidas clearly asserts that "anyone who behaves the way these demons behaved, is a demon himself".

The horrors that Sita suffered at Lanka have been briefly described in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 31 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 6-8. A remarkable similarity is to be found between the present verse no. 58 of Vinai Patrika where Tulsidas has prayed to Lord Ram to eliminate the symbolic demons who have been causing horrors for him, and the way Sita has asked Lord Ram to do so in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 27. A similar request has been made by Hanuman to Lord Ram to take immediate steps to provide relief to Sita: refer—Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 31.

⁵The five 'Koshas'—The word 'Kosha' literally means a sheath, a chamber, a cell, a store or treasury. According to metaphysics, the gross body of a Jiva (living being) consists of five Koshas. The Atma or the soul of the Jiva that lives inside the body is surrounded by these five Koshas.

According to *Paingalo-panishad*, canto 2, verse no. 4 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, these are the following—'Annamaye Kosh' or the food sheath, 'Pranmaye Kosh' or the vital wind sheath, 'Manomaye Kosh' or the mental sheath, 'Vigyanmaye Kosh' or the intellect sheath, and 'Anandmaye Kosh' or the bliss sheath. [These sheaths cover the Atma or pure conscious self like various coverings or shrouds wrapping any object.]

The *Annamaye Kosh* is that which was created by the intake of food, was nourished and developed by food, and at the end it finally disintegrates into the basic

ingredients that constitutes food and merges with the earth element from where the food has derived its original ingredients. This forms the gross body of the creature.

The *Pranmaye Kosh* consists of the five vital winds (Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Udaana, and Samaana) along with the five organs of actions (hands, legs, mouth, excretory and reproductive).

The *Manomaye Kosh* consists of the mind and the five organs of perceptions (ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin), while the *Vigyanmaye Kosh* consists of the combined apparatus made of the intellect and these five organs of perceptions.

A combination of these three sheaths, i.e. Pranmaye Kosh (vital wind sheath), Manomaye Kosh (the mental sheath) and Vigyanmaye Kosh (the intellect sheath) is what is known as the 'Ling Deha' of a creature, or the ethereal form of the corporeal body. This is the subtle body of the creature.

The sheath in which the pure conscious self is not aware of the 'Ling Deha' is called *Anandmaye Kosh*. This forms the causal body of the creature (4)".

These five sheaths are called the 'Panch Kosha'.

The *Atma*, which is the truthful identity of the creature, lives in a body consisting of various sheaths, called 'Koshas', as mentioned above. Like the crystal, the attribute-less, neutral, featureless, untainted and immaculate Atma acquires the various attributes and qualities of these sheaths that surround it, because of the fact that the Atma lives in a body consisting of these sheaths, and it cannot remain indifferent to being effected by their individual characteristics and virtues, whether good or bad. Consequentially, the pristine pure Atma appears to have all these taints and scars that these sheaths possess.

In the present context, these five Koshas are like the palaces within which the Atma representing the Jiva lives.

⁶The three Gunas—See note of verse no. 57 herein above.

⁷Yam and Niyam— The virtues of Yam and Niyam have been described in Skanda Puran, Bra. Dha. Maa. 5/19-21 as follows:-

The ten 'Yams' are—(i) 'Satya' or truthfulness; (ii) 'Kshama' or forgiveness, (iii) 'Asteya' or not stealing, (iv) 'Dhyaana' or meditation and concentration of the mind, (v) 'A-maan' or being free from pride, ego and haughtiness, (vi) 'Ahinsa' meaning lack of cruelty and violence as well as having compassion and mercy, (vii) 'Sanyam' or restraint of mind and sense organs, (viii) 'Dama' or observing self restraint and enduring pain and suffering cheerfully, (ix) 'Prasaad' or to give charitably and accept whatever comes one's way without yearning for more or complaining, (x) 'Maadhura and Mridu' or sweetness in demeanours as well as in words.

The ten 'Niyams' are—(i) 'Shauch' and (ii) 'Snaan' or cleanliness and purification of body and mind, ablution and bath to clean and purify the external and the internal body; (iii) 'Tapa' or doing austerities and penances, to suffer for some great and noble cause; (iv) 'Daan' or giving alms and making charities; (v) 'Maun' or keeping silence and not talking unnecessarily; (vi) 'Yagya' or doing sacrifices and other auspicious deeds; (vii) 'Adhyayan' or to read and study the scriptures etc. with full attention and interest; self study; (viii) 'Vrat' or observance of auspicious vows, diligence in following righteous deeds and noble virtues; (ix) 'Upvaas' or keeping fasts, abstaining from indulgences; (x) 'Upastha Danda' or observing strict celibacy and self restraint of sense organs and their desire for gratification. (Skanda Puran, Bra. Dha. Ma. 5/19-21.)

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its canto 5, verse nos. 12 ½ --14 also describes these Yams and Niyams.

The *Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 32-32 describes Yam and Niyam in the following way—"Non-violence, truthfulness, non stealing, celibacy, continence or abstinence from sexual indulgences and other pervert activities of the body and mind, mercy and compassion, simplicity and humility (32), forgiveness, patience and fortitude, restrained eating, and purity of

mind, intellect and body—these are regarded as the ten supreme *Yams*. ‘Tapa’, meaning austerity, penance, sufferance and hardships endured for some noble cause, ‘Santosh’, meaning contentedness and satiety, to have belief on the doctrines and teachings of the scriptures, to make charities and donations, the remembrance of the supreme Lord known as ‘Hari’ and devotedly serving him and contemplating upon him¹ (33), hearing Vedanta (the preaching of Upanishads), to have modesty, honour, dignity, self respect and shame, to have wisdom and intelligence, to repeat the holy Mantras or divine, ethereal words of the Lord, and to keep stern religious vows and observe fasting—these are ten *Niyams*.”

According to *Mandal Brahmin Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Brahman 1, section 1, verse nos. 3-4, the Yam and Niyam are the following—“Verse no. 3 = To overcome the notion of feeling (excessive) heat and cold (and getting agitated about them), to have control over the urge to eat and sleep (more than necessary), to remain ever calm and tranquil (even during the greatest of adversities), to remain unwavering and steady (like a mountain and the flame of a lamp protected from the wind), and to be able to exercise control over the sense organs (of perception and action)—these are categorised as the various ‘Yams’ (3).

“Verse no. 4 = Devotion towards one’s moral preceptor, teacher and guide called a Guru, dedication and diligent pursuit of the path which is righteous, auspicious and noble, contentedness with whatever is available, residence in a secluded and serene place that gives peace, solitude, tranquility and calmness, non-attachment with and indifference towards anything and anyone in this world, diversion of the mind from the sensual pleasures and charming objects of the materialistic world, no expectation of any reward from any deed done or action taken, and a sense of exemplary renunciation—all these are the various ‘Niyams’ to be followed by the seekers of true knowledge of the Atma (4).”

⁸Sage Valmiki has told Lord Ram the places where he should live in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 128—to Doha no. 131. A careful reading of these verses will make it clear that they essentially say the same thing what Tuslidass says here.]

The symbolic Forest

(59)

देव—

दीन—उद्धरण रघुवर्य करुणाभवन, शमन—संताप, पापौघहारी ।
 विमल विज्ञान—विग्रह, अनुग्रहरूप, भूपवर, विबुध, नर्मद, खरारी ।।1।।
 संसार—कांतार अति घोर, गंभीर, घन, गहन तरुकर्म—संकुल, मुरारी ।
 वासना वल्लि खर—कंटकाकुल विपुल, निबिड़ विटपाटवी कठिन भारी ।।2।।
 विविध चितवृत्ति—खग निकर श्येनोलूक, काक वक गृध्र आमिष—अहारी ।
 अखिल खल, निपुण छल, छिद्र निरखत सदा, जीवजनपथिकमन—खेदकारी ।।3।।
 क्रोध करिमत्त, मृगराज कंदर्प, मद—दर्प वृक—भालु अति उग्रकर्मा ।
 महिष मत्सर क्रूर, लोभ शूकररूप, फेरु छल, दंभ मार्जारधर्मा ।।4।।
 कपट मर्कट विकट, व्याघ्र पाखण्डमुख, दुखद मृगव्रात, उत्पातकर्ता ।
 हृदय अवलोकि यह शोक शरणागत, पाहि मां पाहि, भो विश्वभर्ता ।।5।।
 प्रबल अहंकार दुरघट महीधर, महामोह गिरि—गुहा निबिड़ान्धकार ।
 चित्त वेताल, मनुजाद मन, प्रेतगन रोग, भोगौघ वृश्चिक—विकार ।।6।।
 विषय—सुख—लालसा दंश—मशकादि, खल झिल्लि रूपादि सब सर्प, स्वामी ।

तत्र आक्षिप्त तव विषम माया नाथ, अंध मैं मंद, व्यालादगामी ।।7।।
 घोर, अवगाह भव आपगा पापजलपूर, दुष्प्रेक्ष्य, दुस्तर, अपारा ।
 मकर षड्वर्ग, गो नक्र चक्राकुला, कूल शुभ—अशुभ, दुख तीव्र धारा ।।8।।
 सकल संघट पोच शोचवश सर्वदा दासतुलसी विषम गहन ग्रस्तं ।
 त्राहि रघुवंशभूषण कुपाकर, कठिन काल विकराल—कलित्रास—त्रस्तं ।।9।।

(59)

dēva-

dīna-ud'dharaṇa raghuvarya karuṇābhavana, śamana-santāpa, pāpaughahārī.
 vimala vijñāna-vigraha, anugraharūpa, bhūpavara, vibudha, narmada, kharārī.

1.

sansāra-kāntāra ati ghōra, gambhīra, ghana, gahana tarukarma-saṅkula,
 murārī.

vāsanā valli khara-kaṇṭakākula vipula, nibiṛa viṭapāṭavī kaṭhina bhārī. 2.

vividha citavṛtti-khaga nikara śyēnōlūka, kāka vaka gr̥ghra āmiṣa-ahārī.

akhila khala, nipuṇa chala, chidra nirakhata sadā, jīvajana-pathikamana-
 khēdakārī. 3.

krōdha karimatta, mṛgarāja kandarpa, mada-darpa vṛka-bhālu ati ugrakarmā.

mahiṣa matsara krūra, lōbha śūkararūpa, phēru chala, dambha

mārjāradharmā. 4.

kapaṭa markaṭa vikaṭa, vyāghra pākhaṇḍamukha, dukhada mṛgavrāta,
 utpātakartā.

hṛdaya avalōki yaha śōka śaraṇāgataṁ, pāhi māṁ pāhi, bhō viśvabhatrtā. 5.

prabala ahamkāra duraghaṭa mahīdhara, mahāmōha giri-guhā

nibiṛāndhakāraṁ.

citta vētāla, manujāda mana, prētagana rōga, bhōgaugha vṛścika-vikāraṁ. 6.

viṣaya-sukha-lālasā danśa-maśakādi, khala jhilli rūpādi saba sarpa, svāmī.

tatra ākṣipta tava viṣama māyā nātha, andha maiṁ manda, vyālādagāmī. 7.

ghōra, avagāha bhava āpagā pāpajalapūra, duṣprēkṣya, dustara, apārā.

makara ṣaḍvarga, gō nakra cakrākulā, kūla śubha-aśubha, dukha tīvra dhārā.

8.

sakala saṅghaṭa pōca śōcavaśa sarvadā dāsatulasī viṣama gahana grastaṁ.

trāhi raghuvanśabhūṣaṇa kupākara, kaṭhina kāla vikarāla-kalitrāsa-trastaṁ. 9.

Verse no. 59—Oh Lord (Sri Ram)! You are the one who provides salvation and emancipation to those who lack all resources that would enable them to attain this exalted state, i.e. those who are weak, deprived, poor, miserable, wretched and downtrodden.

You are the best in the race of king Raghu. You are an abode of mercy, an embodiment of compassion and benevolence. You are the destroyer of torments and tribulations, and are an eliminator of sins, evils and vices. You are faultless, and an embodiment of knowledge and wisdom of the highest kind. You are the most exalted among merciful and compassionate kings, a bestower of happiness to even the Gods, and an enemy of demon called Khar¹. (1).

Oh Murari²! This forest-like world is very dense, awe-inspiring and terrifying. ‘Trees’ representing the countless deeds done and actions taken by a Jiva (the living being) are planted thickly (densely, closely) in it. The numerous creepers in the form of desires, attachments, passions, infatuations etc. are clinging (to these trees). And numerous sharp thorns in the shape of agitations, discord, uneasiness and agonies are spread all around. This is the way this formidable, dense and intractable forest exists.

[The world is likened to a forest. A Jiva who lives in this world does countless deeds and takes countless actions as part of his routine life and obligations in this world. Not an hour or a day in the life of the Jiva passes when he does not do anything. These deeds and actions are numerous and follow one another in closely, symbolised by the densely growing tree in the forest. When a Jiva does anything he gets attached to the thing he does as well as the result or rewards of his deeds. These represent the clinging creepers because just like the creeper that needs the support of the tree to rise and grow, the numerous desires and passions too rise and grow in direct proportion to the deeds done by the Jiva with expectations of rewards or successes from each and every thing he does. Since success and good rewards are not always possible, and there are full chances of failure and uncertainties that lead to agitations and frustrations and discord etc., they are like the countless thorns that stick out of the trees and creepers to prick and hurt the Jiva.] (2).

In this forest, the numerous Vasanas and Vrittis of the mind (i.e. the countless forms of passions and desires that the Jiva has, as well as the many evil tendencies of the mind) are like the countless groups of different kinds of birds of prey that live in the forest. Some of these birds are the hawk (or falcon), the owl, the crow, the crane or the stork, and the vulture. They are very wicked and cruel, and expert in treachery, deceit and crookedness. They wait in ambush, and upon seeing any ‘hole’ (meaning a loop-hole, or a shortcoming and weakness) in the character of the traveller representing the Jiva who is passing through this forest (world), they pounce upon him and always torment and create nuisance for him in the form of sorrows and miseries in his heart and mind.

[The Vasanas and Vrittis never let the Jiva live in peace even if he tries to carefully wend his way through the world and avoid all the traps that are inherent to it. That is, even if a traveller is carefully walking through a thick forest and avoids the prickly thorns, or getting entangled in the net of creepers, or bumping against the trees or getting lost in their maze, these birds of prey that symbolise the various Vasanas and Vrittis do not spare him and strike at him at the first chance. And this chance is some kind of weakness in his character or slackness in his resolve.] (3).

In the forest-like world, besides the cruel birds, there are many wild animals, such as rogue elephants represented by ‘Krodh’ (anger), the lion represented by roaring ‘Kaam’ (constantly prodding desires and passions), the wolf symbolising ‘Mada’ (haughtiness, hypocrisy and arrogance), and the bear that stands for ‘Garva’ (pride, vanity, haughtiness and ego)—all of them are very cruel and blood-thirsty. Not only that, there are other cruel animals such as the wild buffaloes in the form of ‘Matsarya’ (jealousy, envy, ill-will, indignation), the wild boars representing ‘Lobha’ (greed and avarice), the jackals in the form of ‘Chala’ (deceit, crookedness, cunning, trickery and deception), and the cat (leopard) which symbolises ‘Dambha’ (falsehood, deceit, hypocrisy, vanity etc.). (4).

Here, there are wicked and cunning monkeys in the shape of ‘Kapat’ (deceit, crookedness, treachery, dishonesty and insincerity), and the tigers that are like ‘Paakhanda’ (heresy, false doctrines, hypocrisy, falsehood and imposturing) who always torment the deer and other docile and harmless animals living in the forest who symbolise saints and sages who harm no one and seek no revenge. These wild and wicked animals have no reservations in constantly creating a lot of nuisance and mischief for them.

Oh Lord of the universe! Pained at seeing all this and the sorry state of affairs in this world, I have come to take refuge and shelter in your holy feet. Oh Lord! Protect me, protect me! (5).

Now, even if a Jiva’s soul passing through the gross world, and who represents a traveller going through the formidable forest on his journey to his destination, manages to overcome these obstacles as described above, there are other problems lying ahead for him. There is a huge mountain representing ‘Ahankar’ (false pride, vanity, haughtiness and ego about oneself, the body and one’s achievements) that stands in the way, obstructing the path, and which is very difficult to cross. [That is, it is difficult for a person to overcome pride and ego and their associates that are firmly entrenched in his heart and mind.]

In this mountain there is a dark cave representing ‘Maha Moha’ (the great delusion, great ignorance, extreme degree of worldly attachments, allurements and infatuations). Inside this cave there are fearful phantoms and ghosts in the shape of ‘Chitta’ (the sub-conscious aspect of the mind and its ability to remember and pay attention to anything), man-eating ogres and vampires symbolising ‘Mana’ (mind and heart), other ghosts and evil spirits representing ‘Roga’ (various diseases of the body), and poisonous scorpions who symbolise ‘Bhog and Vilaas’ (intense desire for enjoyment of sensual pleasures and material comforts of the world; over indulgences and self gratifications). (6).

Here in this cave, there are mosquitoes and flies in the shape of unquenchable desire for sensual pleasures, and there are stubborn, wicked people (living in this world) who symbolise the thick cobwebs that act as entangling nets to trap the Jiva once he enters this symbolic cave. [The Jiva finds himself trapped by a net of problems once he allows himself to fall prey to ‘Moha’ which is like a dark cave from which it is almost impossible to come out after entering. That is, if a person develops even a trace of attachment for anything or anyone in this world, he falls in a trap which completely ensnares him.]

Oh Lord! Besides the above horrors, there are serpents represented by the five senses of perception, such as sight, taste, smell, sound and touch, and their corresponding objects in the material world.

Oh Lord, I lament that I have been dumped in this horrifying forest-like world of delusions and ignorance by the force of your powerful ‘Maya’. Oh Lord who rides on Garud (the Eagle)! It appears that I have been blinded by this Maya because I am unable to see the ‘truth’.

[“Maya” is the power of the Creator by which he creates delusions and ignorance. According to metaphysics and the philosophy of the Upanishads, all the spiritual problems of a Jiva arise out of Maya because it creates delusions and ignorance. In other words, Tulsidas says that it is out of ignorance that a Jiva thinks that this world is his final abode and it is the one that would give him happiness. Though the Jiva’s real identity is his Atma, he is so deluded that he thinks that the

gross body is his true self. The delusions and ignorance created by Maya go hand in hand to land the Jiva in a quagmire from where he finds difficult to extricate himself unless he overcomes the fundamental reason for all his torments—that is, unless he overcomes Maya, he cannot get his peace. All the problems that are listed in this verse are generated by Maya. Once Maya is overcome, the rest of the problems would vanish automatically like phantoms and ghosts vanishing in daylight.] (7)

In this forest, there is a huge and frightening river that is deep and turbulent. It represents ‘Vasana’ (worldly desires, passions, lust, greed, avarice, infatuation etc.). This river is filled with water symbolising ‘Paap’ (sins; unrighteous actions and deeds). It is even horrifying to watch this river, let alone thinking to cross across it—because it is uncrossable. [That is, in this mundane existence, it is well nigh impossible for a creature not to commit sin in any form or not to have any desires or passions of any kind. Hence, crossing this symbolic river becomes impossible.]

This river is infested by six crocodiles representing ‘Kaam’ (lust, desire, passion), ‘Krodh’ (indignation, anger, wrath), ‘Lobha’ (greed, avarice), ‘Moha’ (delusions, ignorance, attachments, infatuation etc.), ‘Mada’ (vanity, haughtiness, arrogance, pride), ‘Matsarya’ (envy, jealousy). Then there are countless alligators and whirlpools in the shape of sense organs.

This river has two banks represented by good and bad deeds respectively. And its fast flowing current symbolises the many sorrows and grief that sweep the Jiva off his feet in this world. (8).

Oh the jewel of Raghu's clan (i.e. Lord Sri Ram)! All these rascals have kept me captive, (as a result which) this Tulsidas, who is a devoted servant of yours, is always overwhelmed by worries and miseries. Please save me because I have become scared and petrified due to the fear of this horrific Kaliyug. (9).

[Note: ¹Khar—He was a demon who, along with his brother Dushan and demon commander Trishira, had attacked Lord Ram in the forest, and was subsequently killed in the ensuing battle. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 20 ka.

²Murari—This term literally means the slayer of demon Mur, and is usually applied to Lord Krishna. Employing this term for Lord Ram implies that Tulsidas had the wisdom to see non-duality between the two forms of Ram and Krishna who were both Lord Vishnu in their primary form. Refer verse no. 51, stanza 1 also.]

Prayers offered to Lord Nara and Lord Nārāyaṇa

(The Pilgrimage to Badrikāśrama)

(60)

देव—

नौमि नारायणं, नरं करुणायनं, ध्यान-पारायणं, ज्ञान-मूलं ।

अखिल संसार-उपकार-कारण, सदयहृदय, तपनिरत, प्रणतानुकूलं ।।1।।

श्याम नव तामरस-दामद्युति वपुष, छवि कोटि मदनार्क अगणित प्रकाशं ।

तरुण रमणीय राजीव-लोचन ललित, वदन राकेश, कर-निकर हासं ।।2।।

सकल सौंदर्य—निधि, विपुल गुणधाम, विधि—वेद—बुध—शंभु—सेवित, अमानं ।
 अरुण पदकंज—मकरंद मंदाकिनी मधुप—मुनिवृंद कुर्वन्ति पानं ।।3।।
 शक्र—प्रेरित घोर मदन मद—भंगकृत, क्रोधगत, बोधरत, ब्रह्मचारी ।
 मारकंडेय मुनिवर्यहित कौतुकी बिनहि कल्पांत प्रभु प्रलयकारी ।।4।।
 पुण्य वन शैलसरि बद्रिकाश्रम सदासीन पद्मासनं, एक रूपं ।
 सिद्ध—योगींद्र—वृंदारकानंदप्रद, भद्रदायक दरस अति अनूपं ।।5।।
 मान मनभंग, चितभंग मद, क्रोध लोभादि पर्वतदुर्ग, भुवन—भर्ता ।
 द्वेष—मत्सर—राग प्रबल प्रत्यूह प्रति, भूरि निर्दय, क्रूर कर्म कर्ता ।।6।।
 विकटतर वक्र क्षुरधार प्रमदा, तीव्र दर्प कंदर्प खर खड्गधारा ।
 धीर—गंभीर—मन—पीर—कारक, तत्र के वराका वयं विगतसारा ।।7।।
 परम दुर्घट पथं, खल—असंगत साथ, नाथ! नहिं हाथ वर विरति—यष्टी ।
 दर्शनारत दास, त्रसित माया—पाश, त्राहि हरि, त्राहि हरि, दास कष्टी ।।8।।
 दासतुलसी दीन धर्म—संबलहीन, श्रमित अति खेद, मति मोह नाशी ।
 देहि अवलंब न बिलंब अंभोज—कर, चक्रधर—तेजबल शर्मराशी ।।9।।

(60)

dēva-

naumi nārāyaṇam, naram karuṇāyaṇam, dhyāna-pārāyaṇam, jñāna-mūlam.
 akhila sansāra-upakāra-kāraṇa, sadayahr̥daya, tapanirata, praṇatānukūlam. 1.
 śyāma nava tāmarasa-dāmadyuti vapuṣa, chavi kōṭi madanārka agaṇita
 prakāśam.
 taruṇa ramaṇīya rājīva-lōcana lalita, vadana rākēśa, kara-nikara hāsam. 2.
 sakala saundarya-nidhi, vipula guṇadhāma, vidhi-vēda-budha-śambhu-sēvita,
 amānam.
 aruṇa padakanja-makaranda mandākinī madhupa-munivṛnda kurvanti pānam.
 3.
 śakra-prērīta ghōra madana mada-bhaṅgakṛta, krōdhagata, bōdharata,
 brahmacārī.
 mārakaṇḍēya munivaryahita kautukī binahi kalpānta prabhu pralayakārī. 4.
 puṇya vana śailasari badrikāśrama sadāsina paūāsanaṁ, ēka rūpaṁ.
 sid'dha-yōgīndra-vṛndārakānandaprada, bhadradāyaka darasa ati anūpaṁ. 5.
 māna manabhaṅga, citabhaṅga mada, krōdha lōbhādi parvatadurga,
 bhuvana-bhatṛtā.
 dvēṣa-matsara-rāga prabala pratyūha prati, bhūri nirdaya, krūra karma katṛtā.
 6.
 vikaṭatara vakra kṣuradhāra pramadā, tīvra darpa kandarpa khara
 khaḍgadhārā.
 dhīra-gambhīra-mana-pīra-kāraka, tatra kē varākā vyaṁ vigatasārā. 7.
 parama durghaṭa patham, khala-asaṅgata sātha, nātha! nahim hātha vara
 virati-yaṣṭī.
 darśanārata dāsa, trasita māyā-pāśa, trāhi hari, trāhi hari, dāsa kaṣṭī. 8.
 dāsatulasī dīna dharma-sambalahīna, śramita ati khēda, mati mōha nāśī.
 dēhi avalamba na bilamba ambhōja-kara, cakradhara-tējabala śarmarāśī. 9.

Verse no. 60—I bow before (and pay my obeisance to) Lord Nara-Narayan¹ who is an abode of compassion and mercy, the object of all meditative concentrations, and the

essence or the cause of all knowledge. The Lord is the benefactor of the whole world, is of a merciful and compassionate heart (nature), is ever engrossed in penances and austerities, and is the one who shows benevolence on his devotees who have taken shelter or refuge with him. (1).

The beautiful radiance of his body is akin to a garland of newly bloomed blue lotus; whose beauty (attractiveness) is comparable to millions of Kamdeos (patron God of love and physical beauty), and is splendidous like numerous suns. His pleasant eyes are like newly blooming lotus flower, his countenance is like the moon, and his soft and sweet smile resembles the rays of the moon. (2).

He is a treasury of all that is beautiful and praise worthy, is an abode of many good virtues, is devoid of pride, vanity or haughtiness inspite of being served (honoured, revered and worshipped) by Brahma (the creator of the world), the Vedas (ancient scriptures), those who are expert in knowledge of the scriptures, and Lord Shiva. The numerous sages and hermits in a symbolic form of bees always drink the nectar of river Mandakini which has emerged from his pink (or red) coloured feet.

[That is, the great sages and hermits drink the water of the holy river Ganges, which is also known by the name of 'Mandakini' in the upper reaches of the Himalayan mountains from where it emerged, while they live on its banks there. This river is reputed to provide liberation and deliverance to the Jiva, the living being, who has faith in its mystical spiritual powers. This river has this unique quality because it originated from the holy feet of Lord Vishnu. It ought to be noted here that Tulsidas has offered his obeisance to Lord Nara-Narayan because he knows that the Lord is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu who had also manifested as Lord Ram, the Lord revered and worshipped by Tulsidas. In this stanza, the sages and hermits residing on the banks of river Mandakini are likened to the 'bees', and the river itself to the 'lotus flower'. Just like the bees hum around the lotus and alight on it to drink its nectar, feeling contented thereby, these hermits and sages who live along the banks of the river too enjoy and feel spiritually contented when they are able to live near the holy river, bathe in it and drink its water.] (3).

The Lord is the crusher of the vanity and arrogance of fierce Kamdeo who was sent by Indra (to disturb the Lord's penance). The Lord has no trace of anger, wrath or vengeance in his nature. [This statement sets to rest the doubt that arises about the temperament of the Lord in the context of his 'crushing the arrogance of Kamdeo. He never becomes angry nor does he harbour any notion of vengeance against anyone. He had punished Kaamdeo because the latter had tried to be arrogant and disturb the Lord's penance.]²

The Lord is an embodiment of pure and true knowledge, and he is a celibate. He had created a magical and illusionary spectacle of dooms-day for the purpose of showing it to sage Markandey even without it actually happening³. (4).

He stays permanently in 'Padmaasan' (which is a sitting posture with legs crossed over each other, upturned palms placed on them at the center, the spine ram-rod straight and the eyes closed) posture in Badrikaashram⁴. His Darshan (i.e. the auspicious viewing of the Lord's image in the shrine at Badrinaath in the Himalayas) is very pleasant and matchlessly divine. This sight gives immense joy to the beholder, and it provides auspiciousness to Siddhas (mystics), to Yogis (those who do penances and meditation), to Indra (the king of gods), and to all other exalted Beings. (5).

Oh the Lord of the universe! There, en-rout to your abode at Badrikaashram, is a mountain called 'Man-Bhang' (*manabhaṅga* which literally means 'one which breaks the shackles of ego and pride from the mind and heart'). Similarly, a symbolic mountain in the form of pride, vanity, ego, arrogance and haughtiness resides inside my own heart and mind, my 'Mana'. [It means that one of the first obstacles that a Jiva faces before he can come face to face with the Lord God and have his divine sight is in the form of the obstinate nature of his own mind and heart that have pride and ego as their inherent nature. They are compared to a 'mountain' because they are huge and unsurmountable for all practical purposes for an ordinary person. Of course, those who are determined to complete their pilgrimage, i.e. those who are determined to reach their spiritual goal of being one with the Supreme Being, this mountain can be overcome. And it implies 'control of the Mana; control of the mind and heart'.]

Then there is another great mountain known as 'Chitta-Bhang' (*chitabhaṅga*). It stands for similar formidable obstacles of the mind and sub-conscious known as 'Chitta'. These obstacles are the same as aforesaid, viz.: pride, vanity, vanity, hypocrisy, ego etc. [In other words, it is necessary to eliminate these negativities from the inner-self completely—from the heart, the mind and the sub-conscious. Their elimination from the 'sub-conscious' is of utmost importance because it is the sub-conscious that stores all information accessed by the mind and acts as a back-room boy and reference source. The conscious mind may be controlled by effort and alertness, but if the software is corrupted, if the backroom assistant and referral material is corrupted, then sooner rather than later the mind would be led astray as soon as it lays down its guard. And obviously it is not possible to be on the guard at all times of the day and night. So it is essential to keep the house clean from within and without.]

Besides these fear-inspiring spiritual obstacles which are metaphorically represented by the two mountains mentioned above, there are many others, small and big. These difficult-to-cross mountains (spiritual obstacles) are represented by such negative traits as greed, avarice, passion, infatuation, desire etc. [All these negative traits are also present inside a seeker's inner-self. They are like 'mountains' because they are huge barriers separating the Jiva from the Supreme Being and act as formidable obstacles in his spiritual path to liberation and deliverance.]

{It will be noted that almost similar negative traits are used as metaphors for different mountains, some which are prominent and specially named, and others that are there but unnamed. This is done to imply that the negative qualities that are regarded strong and stubborn like the mountains are of varying types, degrees and dimensions like the many mountains, some huge and some small, some that stand out as formidable obstacles, and some that are there but look inconsequential as they can be crossed (or their obstruction can be overcome) more easily.}

The barrier of mountains notwithstanding, there are other horrible and fearful obstacles in the form of different cruel and wild animals which roam freely along the path. These animals are represented by such negative traits as attachments, envy, jealousy, anger, wrath, discord etc., each one of them equally ferocious, cruel and wicked. [That is, besides the physical obstacles created by the mountains, there is the grave fear from the countless wild animals that roam freely on the path to Badrikaashram. Metaphorically it means that all the negative traits listed in these stanzas act together to inhibit the seeker's spiritual journey, in his quest for success in spiritual liberation and enlightenment. And all of them are to be overcome before the

‘pilgrim’, the spiritual aspirant, can actually hope to succeed in his pilgrimage symbolising emancipation and salvation of the soul.] (6).

[More problems are listed now.] The lustful glances of a beautiful woman are like the terrible, sharp edges of a knife, and the poison of desire and passion is like the sharp edge of a sword which inflicts grave and mortal wounds (i.e. creates agony and tumult) in the hearts of even those who are otherwise very sober, serious, patient, equanimous and wise. In such a difficult situation, what do feeble, weak and meek persons like us count? [That is, when those who are normally wise and learned, those who are naturally sober and self-restraint by their temperament, get aroused by the lustful presence of a seducing woman and are overcome with lust and passion, it can be easily imagined how difficult it is for ordinary people to resist this temptation. This is the next level of obstacle that presents in the way of a spiritual aspirant who wishes to do Tapa and Yoga to attain oneness with the Supreme Being symbolised by Lord Nara-Narayan.] (7).

Oh Lord! To start with, this path that leads me (who represent all pilgrims) to your divine abode where I can have your holy vision (Darshan) is difficult and full of hurdles. Then the company which I have is of wicked and mischievous people, and to make matters worse I don't even have the support of a cane (or a stick which helps climbers to climb steep gradients on a mountain trail) in the form of renunciation. This humble servant (devotee, follower) of yours is very eager to have your Darshan (divine and holy vision), but unfortunately he has been caught in the snare (or loop, trap) of delusions, bewilderments, confusions, ignorance etc. which are causing immense consternation and sorrow for him. [That is, I am perplexed and confounded, not knowing what to do and how to reach my spiritual destination in the face of such horrifying obstacles and hindrances as narrated herein above.]

So, oh Lord, I beseech you, pray to you and urge you to save your servant (devotee, follower; spiritual seeker) by removing his troubles, sufferings, miseries and tribulations. (8).

This poor Tulsidas does not have pocket expenses for the journey in the form of ‘Dharma’ (good virtues); he is weary of tiredness, delusions and ignorance, and confusions have destroyed his wisdom and discrimination. [Tulsidas says that he is very humble and does not pretend to be armed with good virtues that can solely help him reach his spiritual goal if the Lord does not help him and be kind upon him.]

Hence, Oh the bearer of Chakra (discus)! [This clearly refers to Lord Vishnu whose incarnation was Lord Ram.] You are a treasury of splendour, radiance, strength and happiness; you are an embodiment of glorious virtues. So oh Lord, please be kind to give me the support of your hand without any further delay.

[Tulsidas likens himself to a pilgrim undertaking the arduous journey to Badrikaashram in the upper heights of the mighty Himalayas. He has said earlier that he does not have even a walking stick to support him, and he is weary and tired. The physical barriers by way of mountains and wild animals are huge and causing depression in the pilgrim's mind who is apprehensive of them. He does not have the money to pay for a pony to ride upon or a porter to carry his luggage. His companions are all wicked. In this scenario, he is perplexed and confounded; he is overcome with horror and fear. So he asks his Lord Sri Ram to help him. The Lord is most merciful and compassionate, and a protector of those who take refuge with him. So surely he would help Tulsidas. This is the earnest plea of this great saint!] (9).

[Note—¹Lord Nara-Narayan— As the name suggests, this incarnation of Lord Vishnu was to establish the principle of Advaitya or non-duality of Vedanta which says that the Jiva, the living being, and the Ishwar, the Supreme Being known as Brahm are not two distinct entities but the same cosmic Consciousness existing in two different planes—the former at the microcosmic level of creation and the latter at the macrocosmic level of creation.

The word ‘Nara’ literally means a man, and ‘Narayan’ refers to the supreme Lord. At the beginning of creation, the supreme Brahm had revealed himself in two forms called Nara and Narayan. From the angle of the Upanishads and the genesis of creation described in them, the Nara was the primary man, and the Narayan was the Viraat Purush known as Vishnu. The Nara was created as an image of Narayan. [Refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda.]

These two images of the Supreme Being, i.e. Nara and Narayan, were assumed by Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush, to establish the importance of Tapa (austerity and penance) as well as Vairagya (renunciation and total detachment from the material charms of this deluding world). They had matted lock of hairs on the head, held a Swan in their hands to indicate purity and wisdom, had the mark of the Chakra (discus of Vishnu) on the sole of their feet to indicate that they have conquered the world, and the sign of the Srivatsa (the foot-print of sage Durvasa) on the chest to imply their grand virtues of extreme humility, forgiveness, fortitude, tolerance, and love for devotees.

After birth, they went to the higher reaches of the northern Himalayas to do severe Tapa in the region now known as Badrikaashram. There they did Tapa for thousands of years. The king of Gods felt jealous of them and tried his best to distract them by employing all the tricks he could—such as luring them with great boons, sending Apsaras (celestial beauties) and Kamdeo (the God of lust and passion) to distract them with sexually explicit overtures, singing, music and dance, and so on and so forth. But he failed in all attempts, and had to surrender. The sages neither fell in any trap nor did they become angry or cursing. This incarnation therefore was taken to establish the glorious virtues of Tapa, Vairagya, Kshamaa (forgiveness), Namrataa (humility), Titiksha (endurance, sufferance, fortitude and tolerance), not having Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness and arrogance) etc.

It is believed that Lord Nara and Narayan are personified forms of these grand and glorious virtues, and are still doing Tapa in the Himalayas. Perhaps this is the reason why one finds an extreme sense of spiritual fulfilment and surging exhilaration when one meditates in the Himalayas.

²Kamdeo being sent to disturb the Tapa of Lord Nara-Narayan—Kamdeo is the god of passion and lust. It is narrated in Purans that Kamdeo was frequently asked by Indra, the king of gods, to go and disturb the Tapa (penance and austerity) that great sages and hermits did. Though it seems incredulous that the ‘king of gods would do such a sinful thing as disturbing the sage’s Tapa’, but nevertheless he did it because he was very jealous of all those who could attain a stature senior than him, and Tapa was a means to achieve success in it.

But the stories of the Purans must be understood properly to decipher their true intent and meaning, for otherwise they look absolutely incredulous and nonsensical. Now let us see what this idea actually means in the context of metaphysics.

The real meaning of this legend is however very different. The word ‘Indra’ comes from the word ‘Indri’, meaning the sense organs of a creature’s gross body. These sense organs are accustomed to seeking physical comfort and pleasures from the physical world of material things. They are happy with a person who appeases them and fulfils their desire for self-gratification, and are angry with him who prevents them from worldly enjoyments. When these sages and hermits did Tapa they practiced self-restraint and self-control of the highest order, and this was not acceptable to the sense organs or the ‘Indris’. So they got together and did their best

to throw a spanner in the wheel by doing everything in their might to disturb the sage's Tapa.

The sense organs are ten in number: five of perception, and five of action. The five organs of perception are—ears which hear, eyes which see, nose which smells, tongue which tastes, and skin which touches and feels. The five organs of action are—mouth that speaks and eats, hands which accept, legs which move and take the creature to the desired place, excretory that eliminates the waste produced by the other organs inside the body, and reproductive that help to satisfy desire for sensual pleasures and sex instincts as a means to propagate this creation and keep the other organs busy.

Kamdeo is a symbol of the natural urges, the natural instincts, the inherent passion, desire, wants and yearnings that all these organs have and exhibit in a teamed, synchronised manner. Thus, if the sage manages to control one or two of the urges or desires, and if he is not careful, the rest of the members of this team try their best to pull the rug from under his feet, so to say. In other words, doing Tapa becomes very difficult for the sage and hermit. This phenomenon is metaphorically depicted by saying that “Indra sent Kamdeo to disturb the Tapa of the sages and hermits”.

A similar incident is narrated in the epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’. It is described here that the gods had sent Kamdeo to disturb the Tapa of Lord Shiva. The intention here, however, was that Shiva would be cajoled to marry Parvati and beget a son who would destroy the demon Tarkaasur. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.

³The story of sage Maarkandey—: Sage Maarkandey was very chaste, enlightened, self restrained, very adept in austerities, and a wise saint. Indra became afraid of his abilities and sent Kamdeo with his army to corrupt the sage's wisdom, but he failed in the attempt. Pleased, the Lord appeared before Maarkandey and asked him to request for a boon. The sage wished to see the Lord's Maya, at which request the mirage of the great dooms-day deluge appeared before him as if the whole universe was drowned in water.]

⁴Badrikaashram (Badrikāśrama)—This is one of the four great pilgrim places in India which all Hindus are expected to visit at least once in a lifetime. Here there is a famous shrine (‘Ashram’) dedicated to Lord Badrinaath, or the Lord of Badri. It is so-called because this place is covered in a shroud of clouds for most parts of the year. [“Badri” = cloud.] Lord Vishnu is worshipped here. There are two summits opposite the shrine symbolizing the two forms of Lord Nara and Lord Narayan doing Tapa.

The metaphysical significance of this site is that it establishes non-duality between Lord Narayan or Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, and the human being known as ‘Nara’. It teaches us that essentially there is no difference between the Jiva, the ‘Nara’, and the Supreme Being known as ‘Narayan’. But how do they become ‘non-dual’ and ‘one’? It is by the means of Tapa. Put simply it means that if a Nara, the ‘living being’, is able to exercise full control over his sense organs, i.e. practices Tapa, then he becomes equivalent to ‘Narayan’ or the ‘supreme Being’.]

Prayers offered to Lord Viṣṇu as ‘Bindu Mādhava’

(61)

देव—

सकल सुखकंद, आनंदवन पुण्यकृत, बिंदुमाधव द्वंद्व—विपतिहारी ।

यस्यांघ्रिपाथोज अज—शंभु—सनकादि, शुक—शेष, मुनिवृंद अलि निलयकारी ॥१॥

अमल मरकत श्याम, काम शतकोटि छवि, पीतपट तड़ित इव जलदनीलं ।
 अरुण शतपत्र लोचन, विलोकनि चारु, प्रणतजन—सुखद, करुणार्द्रशीलं ।।2।।
 काल—गजराज—मृगराज, दनुजेश—वन—दहन पावक, मोह—निशि—दिनेशं ।
 चारिभुज चक्र—कौमोदकी—जलज—दर, सरसिजोपरि यथा राजहंसं ।।3।।
 मुकुट, कुंडल, तिलक, अलकअलिघ्रातइव, भृकुटि, द्विज, अधरवर, चारुनासा ।
 रुचिर सुकपोल, दर ग्रीव सुखसीव, हरि, इंदुकर—कुंदमिव मधुरहासा ।।4।।
 उरसि वनमाल सुविशाल नवमज्जरी, भ्राज श्रीवत्स—लांछन उदारं ।
 परम ब्रह्मन्य, अतिधन्य, गतमन्यु, अज, अमितबल, विपुलमहिमा अपारं ।।5।।
 हार—केयूर, कर कनक कंकन रतन—जटित मणि—मेखला कटिप्रदेशं ।
 युगल पद नूपुरामुखर कलहंसवत, सुभग सर्वांग सौंदर्य वेशं ।।6।।
 सकल सौभाग्य—संयुक्त त्रैलोक्य श्री दक्षि दिशि रुचिर वारीश—कन्या ।
 बसत विबुधापगा निकट तट सदनवर, नयन निरखंति नर तेऽति धन्या ।।7।।
 अखिल मंगल—भवन, निबिड़ संशय—शमन, दमन—वृजिनाटवी, कष्टहर्ता ।
 विश्वधृत, विश्वहित, अजित, गोतीत, शिव, विश्वपालन—हरण, विश्वकर्ता ।।8।।
 ज्ञान—विज्ञान—वैराग्य—ऐश्वर्य—निधि, सिद्धि अणिमादि दे भूरिदानं ।
 ग्रसित—भव—व्याल अतित्रास तुलसीदास, त्राहि श्रीराम उरगारि—यानं ।।9।।

(61)

dēva-

sakala sukhakanda, ānandavana puṇyakṛta, bindumādhava dvandva-
 vipatihārī.

yasyāṅghripāthōja aja-śambhu-sanakādi, śuka-śēṣa, munivṛnda ali nilayakārī.

1.

amala marakata śyāma, kāma śatakōṭi chavi, pītapata taḍita iva jaladanīlaṁ.
 aruṇa śatapatra lōcana, vilōkani cāru, praṇatajana-sukhada, karuṇārdraśīlaṁ.

2.

kāla-gajarāja-mṛgarāja, danujēśa-vana-dahana pāvaka, mōha-niśi-dinēśaṁ.
 cāribhuja cakra-kaumōdakī-jalaja-dara, sarasijōpari yathā rājahansaṁ. 3.
 mukuṭa, kuṇḍala, tilaka, alaka'alivrāta'iva, bhr̥kuṭi, dvija, adharavara,
 cārunāsā.

rucira sukapōla, dara grīva sukhasīva, hari, indukara-kamudamiva
 madhurahāsā. 4.

urasi vanamāla suvīśāla navamajjārī, bhr̥āja śrīvatsa-lāñchana udāraṁ.
 parama brahman'ya, atidhan'ya, gataman'yu, aja, amitabala, vipulamahimā
 apāraṁ. 5.

hāra-kēyūra, kara kanaka kaṅkana ratana-jaṭita maṇi-mēkhalā kaṭi pradēśaṁ.
 yugala pada nūpurāmukhara kalahansavata, subhaga sarvāṅga saundarya
 vēśaṁ. 6.

sakala saubhāgya-sanyukta trailōkya śrī dakṣi diśi rucira vārīśa-kan'yā.
 basata vibudhāpagā nikāṭa taṭa sadanavara, nayana nirakhanti nara tēti
 dhan'yā. 7.

akhila maṅgala-bhavana, nibiṛa sanśaya-śamana, damana-vr̥jināṭavī,
 kaṣṭahatr̥tā.

viśvadhṛta, viśvahita, ajita, gōṭita, śiva, viśvapālana-haraṇa, viśvakatr̥tā. 8.
 jñāna-vijñāna-vairāgya-aīśvarya-nidhi, sid'dhi aṇimādi dē bhūridānaṁ.
 grasita-bhava-vyāla atitrāsa tulasīdāsa, trāhi śrīrāma uragāri-yānaṁ. 9.

Verse no. 61—[In this verse, Tulsidas refers to the patron deity of the ‘Bindu Madhav Temple’ at Vaishnav Kashi belonging to that sect of Hindus who were followers of Lord Vishnu at Varanasi. This temple is said to have co-existed with the Vishwanath Shiva Temple which was dedicated to Lord Shiva. According to history of India, both these temples were brought down during the reign of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Tulsidas died earlier during the reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir, and the temples were demolished later.]

The glories of Lord Bindu-Madhav are extolled in verse nos. 61-63. The reason why Tulsidas chose this deity for adoration is that its form is similar to that of Lord Vishnu though it is known by another name as ‘Bindu Madhav’. It will be noted that there is a remarkable similarity in these three verses. Only some of these similarities have been cited as examples in our presentation below for reference purposes only because the similarities are so intricately woven into the respective texts and overlap each other that if each similarity was to be cited separately there would be a lot of confusion in the flow of the narrative of the concerned verse.]

Oh Bindu Madhav (which is a form of Lord Vishnu)! You are like a cloud which pours rains of happiness and joy. You are the one who purifies the symbolic forest called Varanasi, a forest which is very pleasant by the virtue of your presence. [Here, ‘purification’ means to make holy and sanctified. Lord Bindu Madhav’s presence in this pilgrim city makes it sinless and holy.]

You are the remover of troubles created by ‘Raag and Dwesh’. [This means that you remove all the different kinds of emotional problems that are created by having attachments or infatuation with one thing, and keeping animosity, envy, jealousy and ill-will towards another thing, which leads to tussle, to mutual distrust, discord, contradictions, conflicts, debates etc.]

Exalted gods and sages such as Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, sages Sanak-Sankadi¹, sage Shukdeo², Lord Sesh Nath³ and other sages reside permanently at your holy feet like bees (that keep in close proximity with the lotus flower). [That is, these exalted Ones have their minds and thoughts focused at your holy feet. They are compared to the ‘bee’ because the mind of the bee is focused on the lotus flower from which it draws nectar. The holy feet of Lord Vishnu in the form of Bindu-Madhav is also like the lotus flower.] (1).

You are of a dark blue complexion like a pure Sapphire (refer also to verse no. 62, stanza no. 1). Your beauty is akin to 100 crores (millions of) Kamdeos (the patron god of physical charm and beauty), and you wear a ‘Pitambar’ (a yellow silk cloth wrapped around the body). This Pitambar looks pretty and magnificent like the shimmering lightening seen against the background of dark clouds. [Lord Vishnu wears a yellow coloured silk cloth called ‘Pitambar’, and his complexion is depicted as being of a dark hue like that of a rain-bearing cloud. So a comparison is made with the lightening and the cloud. Compare verse no. 62, stanza no. 11, and verse no. 63, stanza no. 4.]

Your eyes are like a red (pink) lotus, and your gaze (or glance) is most attractive. You provide succour, comfort, joy and well-being to your devotees, and are drenched (soaked) in mercy, compassion and kindness as a matter of habit. [That is, being merciful, kind, compassionate and graceful is a natural trait of yours; they are most natural to you and part of your habit and character.] (2).

You are like a ‘lion’ to kill (overcome; conquer) the (fear of) Kaal (death; bad times) that is like an elephant (huge, rogue and strong); you are like a ‘fire’ to burn the forest of demons (representing various kinds of evils, vices, sins, perversions), and are like a ‘sun’ to eliminate the night of darkness represented by Moha (delusions, ignorance, attachments, infatuations). [The lion can easily defeat and kill an elephant which other animals can’t. Here, ‘Kaal’ has been likened to an elephant, and the Lord to a lion. Similarly, the Lord is likened to the fire that can destroy a forest symbolising evil forces and tendencies in a person, and to a sun that can remove the darkness of night representing delusions and ignorance. These three metaphors are used to stress the glories of Lord Vishnu as Bindu-Madhav.]

[In the following stanzas, the physical form of Lord Bindu Madhav is being described. This form is exactly like that of Lord Vishnu.]

You have a conch, a discus, a mace and a lotus in your four hands respectively (refer: verse no. 62, stanza no. 8, and verse no. 63, stanza no. 5). The white conch-shell in your hand looks as magnificent as a majestic Swan sitting on a lotus flower. (3).

The crown on your head, the ear-rings in the ear, the sign of a ‘Tilak⁴’ on the forehead, the black curls (of hair) on your head that resemble bumble-bees (who have alighted there), the curved eye-brows, the beautiful row of teeth, the enchanting lips and the well chiselled nose—all of these look extremely pretty and enchanting to the beholder (and captivates his mind and heart). The beautiful cheek and conch-like (well-shaped and muscular) neck appear to be a bench-mark of beauty. [The ‘neck’, or the throat produces sound or voice when air passes through the vocal cord inside it. Hence it is compared to the ‘conch’ because it too produces a sound when air is blown through it. Compare: verse no. 62, stanza nos. 8 and 10; and verse no. 63, stanza no. 6.]

Oh Hari (which is one of the many names of Lord Vishnu)! Your sweet and pleasant smile is like the rays of the moon and the flower of the water-lily. [That is, the Lord’s smile is pleasing and soothing like the cool rays of the moonlight, and it is as beautiful, soft and attractive as the water-lily.] (4)

Your chest is adorned with a big (large) garland known as ‘Vanamala’ (*vanamāla*) which is made of freshly plucked flowers of the Kadamba tree (*Nauclea cadamba*), marigold and daisy or xanthium that are interspersed with the buds of the Tulsi plant (i.e. the Basil plant). Besides this garland, your chest also bears the foot-prints of sage Bhrighu (known as *śrīvatsa*). These footprints could have been a sign of an insult of you by sage Bhrighu (*lāñchana*), but you are forgiving and benevolent that you keep this mark on your chest as a sign of respect for this Brahmin sage, thereby showing to the rest of the world how gracious and broad-hearted you are (*udāraṁ*)⁵. This gesture of your show that you give great respect to Brahmins (i.e. the learned class of people who are well-steeped in the knowledge of Brahm, the Supreme Being—‘*parama brahman'ya*’). [Refer: Verse no. 62, stanza no. 6; and verse no. 63, stanza no. 4.]

You are most honourable, most revered and an exalted Being; Glory to you! (*atidhan'ya*). You are beyond the purview of such negative traits as pride, ego, hypocrisy and vanity (i.e. you have no trace of these negativities in you; ‘*gataman'yu*’). You are without any birth (‘*aja*’; i.e. you are eternal and infinite, without a beginning). You have strength and valour that are measureless (*amitabala*).

And you have immense divine virtues and glories that are infinite and measureless (vipulamahimā apāram). (5).

You wear a necklace on your chest, golden armlets on your arms, gem-studded bracelets on your wrists, and a jewel-studded waist-band around your waist. There are anklets on your feet which chime like the sweet sound made by swans. Your whole body is beautiful, enchanting and glamorous, and your whole attire is also as charming as your physical form. [Compare verse no. 62, stanza nos. 4-5.] (6).

The daughter of the ocean, which is known as the 'Lord of the rain' (vārīśa-kan'yā), i.e. goddess Laxmi⁶, who is all-auspicious and the glory of the three Lokas (i.e. the three worlds), resides (stays) at your right-hand side. You stay in a beautiful and grand temple near the river Ganges. Those people who have your Darshan (i.e. have a holy sight of your divine form with piety and devotion) are most honourable, worthy of respect and privileged (tēti dhan'yā). [It is to be noted here that in the Bindu Madhav temple that existed at the time of Tulsidas, the idol of goddess Laxmi was placed to the right of the idol of Lord Bindu Madhav. This temple was later on brought down by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. At the time of its demolition by the latter, some priests had removed the idol of the deities to prevent their desecration. When the new and present temple was re-built, the idol of Laxmi was put to the left of that of Lord Bindu Madhav to conform to the tradition that Laxmi stays to the left of Vishnu. Refer: Verse no. 62, stanza no. 12; and verse no. 63, stanza no. 8.] (7).

You are an abode of all types of auspiciousness. You are the destroyer (eliminator, remover) of the most difficult types of doubts, bewilderments and confusions that a person can have (in spiritual matters); you can reduce to ashes the forest of sins, vices and evils; and are the eliminator of troubles, sufferings, miseries and agonies (of your devotees).

You are the bearer of the universe, and its benefactor and well-wisher (viśvadr̥ṣṭa; viśvahr̥ṣṭa). You are invincible (ajita), are beyond the comprehension of mind, analysis of the intellect, and reach of perception of the sense organs (gōṭita), are an embodiment of truth, auspiciousness, holiness, wisdom, knowledge, renunciation and other divine virtues that are collectively represented by the word 'Shiva' (śiva), and are the sustainer, the concluder and the creator of the universe (viśvapālana-haraṇa, viśvakatrtā). (8).

You are a treasury (i.e. an embodiment) of the virtues of knowledge, wisdom, renunciation and majestic qualities that has made you so renowned and famed (jñāna-vijñāna-vairāgya-aiśvarya-nidhi).

You are a great and generous donor, one who can bestow the great boons of Anima and other Siddhis⁷.

Oh Lord! This Tulsidas is being swallowed by the world-like serpent (a huge python), which has made him very frightened. [Here, Tulsidas compares the world with a huge python which can devour a full animal. According to legends, the python does not attack its victim by going to it, but it inhales so fiercely that any deer that happens to be nearby gets sucked in. Tulsidas means that it is not that he willingly wants to get trapped by the world, but it is so fierce and powerful that it sucks him

and traps him in its snare, shackling him even against his wishes, and he finds difficult to resist falling prey to it. So, oh Lord, please help me—says Tulsidas.]

Hence, Oh Lord Sri Ram, who mounts the Garuda (the Eagle and the mount of Lord Vishnu) which feeds upon serpents⁸! Please be kind to save me! [Tulsidas requests Sri Ram to instruct his mount Garuda to gobble-up all the tormenting evils of Kaliyug in the form of serpents that have ensnared him in their strong coil. The point to note is that Garuda, the Eagle, is the vehicle of Vishnu. So Tulsidas clearly means that when he is praying to Lord Bindu Madhav, he is actually praying to his beloved Lord Sri Ram because is a manifestation of Vishnu whose another form is Bindu Madhav. Garud is said to be inimical to serpents, and is invoked to fight off the fear of serpents.] (9).

[Note—¹Shankadi—See note of verse no. 47.

²Shukdeo— See note of verse no. 47.

³Sesh-Nath— See note of verse no. 47.

⁴Tilak Mark—This is a religious sign made on the forehead of higher classes in Hindu society. It is basically of two types—(i) Worshippers of Lord Vishnu make two vertical lines just above the root of the nose like a tuning fork, with a dot in the inner side of the concave curve line of the fork at its lower end. (ii) Worshippers of Lord Shiva mark three horizontal lines across the forehead.

Another version of the Tilak is known as the ‘Tilak Pundra’. It is a vertical holy mark made in the center of the forehead similar to the Urdhva-pundra. It is a single line that starts at the on the bridge of the nose and goes straight up to the hair line. Refer *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 7, verse no. 3. It is usually made by monks and hermits who worship Brahm, the ‘One and Supreme Lord’ of creation who has no other forms.

⁵Srivatsa and the story of sage Bhrigu— Sage Bhrigu is a well known sage and seer who appears in a number of Vedic and Purnaic works. His name ‘Bhrigu’ is derived from the root word ‘Bhrij’ or ‘Bhraaj’ which literally means to roast or burn, and therefore it could mean the sage, who was a fire sacrifice priest, had some mystical powers which allowed him to kindle the altar fire automatically by use of Mantras. According to mythological history, the patron God of lightening, Lord Maatarishwan, brought the celestial lightening down to earth and taught three priests the art of kindling the sacred altar fire using the Aranis (‘the fire sticks’ used to kindle fire by vigorous rubbing together). These three priests were the Bhrigu, the Angiras, and the Atharvan.

Sage Bhrigu has is regarded as being one of the nine ‘Manas Putras’ of Brahma, the creator. [That is, Bhrigu was born as the son of Brahma because the latter wished in his mind and heart, the ‘Mana’, to have a son, a ‘Putra’, rather than the usual process by which a son is born, i.e. the physical process of procreation by intercourse.]

He is one of the seven celestial sages known as “Sapta-rishis”.

He is also stated elsewhere as being the son of Indra (the king of Gods). The Taaittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 3, Anuvak 1 describes him as ‘Bhrgu Vaaruni’, i.e. the son of Varun (the Water God). He was the father of Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation. That is why Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, is also known as Bhargavi, the daughter of Bhargava, or Bhrigu.

According to Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 4, Canto 1, verse nos. 43-45, sage Bhrigu had a wife named ‘Khyati’ from whom he begot two sons named Dhaataa and Vidhaataa, and a daughter named Sri. ‘Sri’ (whose another name was Laxmi) was later married to Vishnu. Meanwhile, sage Meru married his daughters Aayati and Niyati to Dhaataa and Vidhaataa respectively. Aayati gave birth to Mrikand, and

Niyati gave birth to Praan. Mrikand's son was the famous sage Markendeya, and Praan's son was Ved-shiraa. Hence, sage Markendeya was a great grandson of Bhrigu.

According to Bhagwat Maha-puran, 3/24/21-24, and 4/1, it is narrated that in the epoch called Swayambhu-Manwantar, king Manu's daughter named Devhuti was married to sage Kardam from whom she begot nine daughters. They were named Kalaa, Anusuya, Shraddha, Havirbhu, Gati, Kriyaa, Urjaa or Arundhati, Chiti and Shaanti, and Khyati. They were married respectively to sages Marichi, Atri, Angiraa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasistha, Atharvan and Bhrigu.

In other births sage Bhrigu is regarded as the grand-father of Shukracharya (also known as Ushnaa), the moral preceptor of the Demons (Refer: Bhagwat, Skandha 4, Canto 1, verse no. 45). [Bhrigu's son was Kavi, and the latter's son was Shukracharya.]

He was one of the ancient sages after whom a lineage was established—and his descendents assumed his name as their surname or title. It is 'Bhargava' or 'Bhrigu'. Some well known names of sages who followed him in this lineage are sages Jamdagni and Parashuram.

He is one of the four sages (the others being Marichi, Atri and Kashyap) who had elaborately described the Vakhaanas Aagam followed by some Vaishnav sects (followers of Vishnu worship).

He performed severe austerity and penance at a place called Bhrigu Kaccha located on the banks of river Narmada where it merges with the Arabian Sea. It is situated in the Broach area of Gujrat state of western India.

He is credited with composing the tome of astrology and horoscopes known as 'Bhrigu Sanhita'. It is said to contain a data base of all possible horoscopes that can be created by considering all possible permutations and combinations of the nine planets and twelve zodiac signs.

The third chapter, called Valli no. 3, of the famous Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is revealed by Varun to Bhrigu when the latter approached his father Varun to ask him the method by which Brahm can be realised.

He once tested the Trinity Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) and determined that Vishnu is the best amongst them and alone deserves worship. This story in brief is as follows—

Once all the sages had collected and decided to judge which of the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder, is the greatest. Sage Bhrigu was appointed to find it out. Bhrigu first went to Brahma and did not show any respect to him. This enraged Brahma, but somehow he managed to control himself. Then Bhrigu went to meet Shiva. Shiva came forward but Bhrigu did not want to meet him, accusing the Lord of following inauspicious way of life. This enraged Shiva who lifted his trident to kill Bhrigu. Then Parvati, the consort of Shiva, intervened and pacified him.

Finally, Bhrigu went to Vishnu who was reclining in his divine abode known as Vaikuntha. Bhrigu got annoyed that Vishnu did not get up to welcome him, and so he kicked the Lord on his chest. Lord Vishnu woke up from his sleep, and instead of becoming angry at Bhrigu asked for his forgiveness as he was unaware that the Brahmin has arrived as he was asleep. Further, Vishnu showed Bhrigu great respect and said that instead of feeling insulted on being kicked on the chest, he is feeling honoured that a great sage had blessed him by touching his body with his august feet. This stunned Bhrigu; he was dumbfounded at the gracious and forgiving nature of Vishnu. But Vishnu's consort Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, was extremely peeved, and she cursed the Brahmin that henceforth the entire Brahmin race will have to suffer because of lack of wealth and would be forced to beg for their sustenance.

Lord Vishnu wears the mark made by the sage's footprint on his chest as a token of respect that he has for learned Brahmins.

Bhrigu came back and narrated the entire thing to the assembly of sages. They decided that indeed it was Lord Vishnu who was the greatest because he had conquered anger, the worst of all the negative qualities and the cause of all strife and destruction. Anger was to become the greatest of evils and vices in this world, and forgiveness as the greatest of virtues.

In the fire sacrifice of Daksha Parjapati in which Sati, the consort of Lord Shiva, had burnt herself due to the insult inflicted upon her husband Shiva by her father Daksha, sage Bhrigu had presided over as the head priest. He was an expert in the rituals of the fire sacrifice, especially those in which the Mantras of the Yajur Vedas were chanted. When Sati had burnt herself, Lord Shiva's attendants who had accompanied her become furious, and they started destroying the fire sacrifice. At that time, sage Bhrigu had saved Daksha's fire sacrifice by invoking some powerful Mantras of the Yajur Veda which are especially designed to ward-off obstruction to fire sacrifices. Once oblations were made into the fire with this Mantras, countless semi-gods named Ribhu were created, who chased away Shiva's attendants and helped to salvage the fire sacrifice.

⁶Laxmi, the daughter of the ocean—Laxmi is the Goddess of well being, majesty, wealth and prosperity. She is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and represents the dynamism of the Lord that helps him to carry out the function of sustenance, development, growth, nourishment and protection of this vast and myriad creation.

Laxmi is the patron goddess of wealth, and she epitomizes all round welfare and well being, not only in material terms but also in spiritual terms for only a well off aspirant who has not to bother about his daily needs can comfortably involve himself in religious activities such as doing fire sacrifices and making charities. If a man is mentally worried about his bread and butter, he would find it hard to concentrate on spiritual pursuits without a sense of guilt of not living up to his responsibilities towards his family, especially when he has spent the whole life as a householder with a large bundle of responsibility on his shoulders. Even the cosmic sustainer and caretaker, Lord Vishnu had to keep her with him in order to take care of the material needs of his subjects. An entire Upanishad, called the 'Saubhagya Laxmi Upanishad' belonging to the Rig Veda tradition is dedicated to this goddess. This Upanishad is chapter no. 9 of this humble author's anthology of Rig Veda Upanishads.

Laxmi was created when the gods and the demons had churned the ocean in search of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity. She is therefore known as the 'daughter of the ocean (vāriśa-kan'yā)'. Refer: Tulsidas' 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 61, stanza no. 7, line no. 1. The ocean is called 'Varish' or the Lord of the rains because it is the ocean from which the water evaporates to form the rain that falls from the cloud.

According to the *Krishna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 16-17, the Shankha (the conch of Lord Vishnu) was born alongside Goddess Laxmi from the Kshir-Sagar during the churning of the ocean, and therefore is regarded as the brother of the Goddess. Later on, both the conch and Laxmi were accepted by Lord Vishnu.

Laxmi is depicted as being standing on a lotus flower. She wears red garments symbolizing fertility and prosperity, and is the patron goddess of material wealth and prosperity. Lord Vishnu needed Laxmi because he was assigned the task of taking care of the physical needs of the world, and material things are needed for this job.

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 11 describes the Mantra dedicated to this Goddess. To quote—"OM salutations! The most glorious, majestic, powerful, great and divine Goddess is the *Laxmi** of the three worlds called the Bhu Loka (the terrestrial world where mortal creatures live; the earth), the Bhuvaha Loka (which is the lower heaven where the junior Gods and spirits live), and the Swaha Loka (the upper heaven where the Lord of the world Vishnu lives). [*The word *Laxmi* is used here as an adjective to describe the glorious virtues and majestic qualities that give greatness and supremacy to an entity. It is usually measured in terms of grandeur, magnificence, prosperity, opulence,

supernatural powers, sway and authority that such an entity possesses. In materialistic world it is usually a synonym for material wealth, prosperity, opulence and the fame that comes with them. In other words, the divine Goddess Laxmi who is the consort of Lord Vishnu personifies these virtues. Since Lord Vishnu is another name for the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-inclusive form of the supreme Brahm, from whom the entire creation has been born and who completely soaks it like water in sponge, it follows that Laxmi represents the dynamic qualities of Vishnu that helps the Lord to sustain and protect the world.]

Let the great Goddess Maha-Laxmi whose other name is ‘Kalkarni’ (i.e. the one who actively controls all the deeds and actions of the creature in all phases of time and circumstance) inspire and impel us towards doing auspicious, righteous and noble deeds.’

This Mantra dedicated to the great Goddess Laxmi in the Gayatri Chanda (style of poetical composition) is enunciated in the Yajur Veda, and is therefore called the ‘Maha-Laxmi Gayatri Mantra’ of the Yajur Veda. It has twenty-four letters or syllables (11).”

⁷Siddhi—See note of verse no. 6

⁸Garud—It is narrated in the epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ that when Lord Ram was caught in a snare consisting of snakes that magically appeared from an arrow shot by Meghnad in the battle-field of Lanka during the epic war, Garud had come to gobble-up all the snakes and free the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kanda, from Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 73—to Doha no. 74 ka.

The *mount* or the *vehicle* of Lord Narayan or Vishnu is the bird called *Garud* (eagle or heron). He is in the form of the legendary bird in the form of an eagle or heron. Garud stands for many things—such as speed and agility of the mind to move from one subject to another. Garud also symbolizes the spoken word. This is because spoken words are transmitted from one point to another by the medium of the sky just like the bird flying from one tree to another. Words and ideas are transmitted from one person to the other like the bird flying off from one tree and perching on another. That is why speech is likened to a bird. Garud is regarded as a personification of the knowledge contained in the Vedas because this knowledge is transmitted through the means of speech. Besides this point, there is another way of looking at this aspect. The knowledge contained in the Vedas help a wise man to reach his spiritual destination much like Lord Vishnu employing the services of Garud if he wants to go any place. The eagle is known to have a long range of vision and flies high up in the sky. The Garud is able to have a broad perspective of the sight seen below because from its high perch in the sky. This indicates the virtues of Vishnu in having wider knowledge and broad vision of life as well as to remain aloof from the humdrum affairs of the deluding world below. The Garud is extremely fast and reaches its destination in a fraction of a second—indicating the almost instantaneous reach of the Lord in all the directions of the creation. Since the Gurud is able to fly it also stands for the imaginative abilities of the mind, and since it has a penetrating vision that sees long distances he stands for the sharp and wise intellect that has foresight and deep insight.

According to *Krishna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 24, Garud took up the form of the Indian Fig tree (known as Bhandir) during Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Krishna.

There is an Upanishad of the Atharva Veda that is dedicated to Lord Garud. It is called the *Garud Upanishad* and it is 31st Upanishad of this Veda. It has the Mantras of Garud which are said to possess great powers to overcome the killer effects of any kind of poison, especially those of snake bite.]

Rāga Āsāvārī

(62)

इहै परम फलु, परम बड़ाई ।
 नखसिख रुचिर बिन्दुमाधव छबि निरखहिं नयन अघाई ॥1॥
 बिसद किसोर पीन सुंदर बपु, प्याम सुरुचि अधिकाई ।
 नीलकंज, बारिद, तमाल, मनि, इन्ह तनुते दुति पाई ॥2॥
 मृदुल चरन सुभ चिन्ह, पदज नख, अति अभूत उपमाई ।
 अरुन नील पाथोज प्रसव जनु, मनिजुत दल-समुदाई ॥3॥
 जातरूप मनि-जटित मनोहर, नूपुर जन-सुखदाई ।
 जनु हर-उर हरि बिबिध रूप धरि, रहे बर भवन बनाई ॥4॥
 कटितट रटति चारु किंकिनि-रव, अनुपम, बरनि न जाई ।
 हेम जलज कल कलित मध्य जनु, मधुकर मुखर सुहाई ॥5॥
 उर बिसाल भृगुचरन चारु अति, सूचत कोमलताई ।
 कंकन चारु बिबिध भूशन बिधि, रचि निज कर मन लाई ॥6॥
 गज-मनिमाल बीच भ्राजत कहि जाति न पदक निकाई ।
 जनु उडुगन-मंगल बारिदपर, नवग्रह रची अथाई ॥7॥
 भुजगभोग-भुजदंड कंज दर चक्र गदा बनि आई ।
 सोभासीव ग्रीव, चिबुकाधर, बदन अमित छबि छाई ॥8॥
 कुलिस, कुंद-कुडमल, दामिनि-दुति, दसनन देखि लजाई ।
 नासा-नयन-कपोल, ललित श्रुति कुंडल भ्रू मोहि भाई ॥9॥
 कुंचित कच सिर मुकुट, भाल पर, तिलक कहौ समुझाई ।
 अलप तड़ित जुग रेख इंदु महुँ, रहि तजि चंचलताई ॥10॥
 निरमल पीत दुकूल अनूपम, उपमा हिय न समाई ।
 बहु मनिजुत गिरि नील सिखरपर, कनक-बसन रुचिराई ॥11॥
 दच्छ भाग अनुराग-सहित इंदिरा अधिक ललिताई ।
 हेमलता जनु तरु तमाल ढिग, नील निचोल ओढाई ॥12॥
 सत सारदा सेष श्रुति मिलिकै, सोभा कहि न सिराई ।
 तुलसिदास मतिमंद द्वंदरत कहै कौन बिधि गाई ॥13॥

(62)

ihai parama phalu, parama barā'ī.
 nakhasikha rucira bindumādhava chabi nirakhahim nayana aghā'ī. 1.
 bisada kisōra pīna sundara bapu, syāma suruci adhikā'ī.
 nīlakanja, bārīda, tamāla, mani, inha tanutē duti pā'ī. 2.
 mṛdula carana subha cinha, padaja nakha, ati abhūta upamā'ī.
 aruna nīla pāthōja prasava janu, manijuta dala-samudā'ī. 3.
 jātarūpa mani-jaṭita manōhara, nūpura jana-sukhadā'ī.
 janu hara-ura hari bibidha rūpa dhari, rahē bara bhavana banā'ī. 4.
 kaṭitaṭa raṭati cāru kiṅkini-rava, anupama, barani na jā'ī.
 hēma jalaja kala kalita madhya janu, madhukara mukhara suhā'ī. 5.
 ura bisāla bhṛgucarana cāru ati, sūcata kōmalatā'ī.
 kaṅkana cāru bibidha bhūśana bidhi, raci nija kara mana lā'ī. 6.
 gaja-manimāla bīca bhrājata kahi jāti na padaka nikā'ī.

janu uḍḍagana-maṅgala bāridapara, navagraha racī athā'ī. 7.
 bhujagabhōga-bhujadaṇḍa kaṇja dara cakra gadā bani ā'ī.
 sōbhāsīva grīva, cibukādhara, badana amita chabi chā'ī. 8.
 kulisa, kunda-kuḍamala, dāmini-duti, dasanana dēkhi lajā'ī.
 nāsā-nayana-kapōla, lalita śruti kuṇḍala bhrū mōhi bhā'ī. 9.
 kuṇcita kaca sira mukuṭa, bhāla para, tilaka kahaurṁ samujhā'ī.
 alapa taḍita juga rēkha indu maham̐, rahi taji cañcalatā'ī. 10.
 niramala pīta dukūla anūpama, upamā hiya na samā'ī.
 bahu manijuta giri nīla sikharapara, kanaka-basana rucirā'ī. 11.
 daccha bhāga anurāga-sahita indirā adhika lalitā'ī.
 hēmalatā janū taru tamāla ḍhiga, nīla nicōla ōṛhā'ī. 12.
 sata sārādā sēṣa śruti milikai, sōbhā kahi na sirā'ī.
 tulasidāsa matimanda dvandarata kahai kauna bidhi gā'ī. 13.

Verse no. 62—It is the only fruit (reward) of this body and its only privilege that one gets to watch the magnificent and beauteous form of Lord Bindu Madhav from the toe to the head. [Refer: Verse no. 63, stanza no. 1. A devotee must think that he is very fortunate and blessed that he is able to have a divine view of the Lord's physical form in its entirety. The point to note is that while viewing the Lord, one must first see the Lord's feet as a mark of respect and submission, and then move his eyes up to the Lord's head. This principle should be applied while viewing any image of the Lord in any shrine.] (1).

The beauty (the attractiveness, the enchantment) of his pure, holy, youthful, healthy and dark-complexioned body is peerless. It appears that the blue lotus, dark clouds, the black catechu plant and sapphire have derived their prettiness and splendour out of his body (i.e. the Lord's body was the source of these qualities). (2).

His tender (soft) feet have the auspicious signs (symbols) of 'Vajra-Ankush'. [The 'Vajra' is the strong weapon used by Indra to control the world by virtue of his being king of gods, while an 'Ankush' is the iron spike-like goad that is used to control wild and rogue elephants. Here, these signs indicate that Vishnu controls both the gods as well as the creatures of this world.]

His toes and nails look so glamorous and unprecedented in beauty as if gem-studded leaves have sprouted from blue lotuses. [Here in this metaphor, 'gem' refers to the toe-nails, 'leaves' to the toes because they are elongated, and 'lotus' to the sole of the feet of the Lord.] (3).

Golden gem-studded anklets (worn around the Lord's ankles) attract the mind and provides joy to the devotees. It appears that Lord Vishnu has assumed various forms and dwells in a symbolic temple erected in the heart of Lord Shiva. [This verse is dedicated exclusively to Lord Bindu Madhav as is clear from stanza no. 1. So what is the idea of Tulsidas in making this statement? He means that Lord Shiva is so highly enlightened that when he worships Lord Ram as his chosen deity¹ he knows that Ram is none else but Lord Vishnu in this form. So, any form of Lord Vishnu is honoured and revered by Lord Shiva because he sees in this form his beloved Lord Ram. Hence, Lord Shiva actually offers his obeisance to Lord Vishnu when he worships any form of the latter, whether as Lord Ram or as Lord Bindu Madhav.] (4).

The sound that is made by the chiming of the bells in waist-band tied around the waist of the Lord is so sweet, pleasant and enchanting that it cannot be described in words. But still, being a poet, I can attempt to make a humble comparison of this sound with the humming sound of the joyous bumble bees that hover around the beautiful petals of the golden lotus flower. [The bee hovers on the lotus flower in search of nectar. The insect is absolutely enamoured at the sight of the blooming lotus that it thinks of nothing else and keeps humming merrily. Here, the bells are compared to the numerous bees that hover around the lotus, the waist of the Lord to the lotus, and the sound of the bells to the humming of the bees. The reference to a 'golden lotus' is a clear indication that the Tulsidas is just imagining how beautiful the sound and sight appears to him. Compare to verse no. 63, stanza no. 3.] (5).

The tenderness of the broad chest of the Lord is highlighted by the presence of the foot-print of sage Brighu (known as Srivastva; refer: verse no. 61, stanza 5; verse no. 63, stanza no. 4.). The bracelet and other ornaments look so glamorous that it appears as if (the creator) Brahma had diligently and carefully created (crafted) them with his own hands. [The creator Brahma is an expert craftsman. So this statement means that these ornaments are so excellent that they appear to have been made by the creator himself instead of some human artisan.] (6).

The gem-studded square pendant in the middle of the garland of 'Gajmukta²' (*gajamanimāla*) is indescribable in its beauty and magnificence, but for the purpose of imagination (or visualisation) it is compared to the prominent seat that the 'Nav-Grahas' (the nine planets that occupy important places in the astrological chart)³ have made for themselves above the dark clouds amongst the cluster of sparkling stars that surround them in the sky. [Here, the 'dark cloud' is the Lord's dark complexion, the 'stars' are the pearls of the garland, and the 'pendant made of Gajmukta' is the seat of the 'Nav-Grahas'. The nine planets stand out in the sky in the midst of thousands of smaller stars just like the Gajumkta stands out in the garland of pearls. Compare to verse no. 63, stanza no. 4.] (7).

The long, strong and flexible serpent-like arms of the Lord (that extend to the knees) are adorned by lotus, conch, discus and mace (which are the characteristic symbols of Lord Vishnu). The Lord's neck is matchless in beauty (because it is shaped like a conch—refer: verse no. 61, stanza no. 4; verse no. 63, stanza no. 5), and his face looks radiant and attractive with its chiselled chin and lips (8).

The glitter of diamonds, the whiteness and glistening shine of the water-lily and the dazzle of a streak of lightening feel shy and faded when compared to the sparkle and shine of the Lord's teeth.

[Tulsidas says—] I very much love (i.e. am extremely charmed by) the sight of the nose, the eyes, the cheeks, the beautiful ear-rings and the eye-brows (of the Lord). [Tulsidas is talking about the image or the idol of Lord Bindu Madhav intalled in the shrine dedicated to this deity as cited in verse no. 61 herein above. Compare to verse no. 63, stanza no. 6.] (9).

The hairs on the head of the Lord are curly. There is a crown on it. The Tilak mark on the forehead looks magnificent, and I (Tulsidas) can compare it with two streaks of lightening which have abandoned their fickleness and flicker and have taken a permanent abode (i.e. have become stable or steady) on the face of the moon (i.e. or the face of Sri Ram in the form of Bindu-Madhav). [Here, the 'two lines of the Tilak

Mark’ are compared to two streaks of lightening, and the ‘beauty of the face’ of the Lord is compared to the full moon. Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza no. 4; verse no. 63, stanza no. 7.] (10).

He (Lord Bindu-Madhav) is wearing a clean ‘Pitambar’ on his body which cannot be compared with anything else, but it could be imagined that a golden cloth has been draped on the summit of a blue mountain studded with numerous gems. [Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza no. 2. The ‘Pitambar’ is the one-piece body wrapping garment of silk worn by Lord Vishnu. Here, the ‘Pitambar’ is compared to the golden cloth, and the ‘blue mountain’ to the physical form of the Lord that has a dark-blue complexion.] (11).

Goddess Laxmi is established affectionately on the right side of the Lord (Vishnu in the form of Bindu-Madhav). She looks as beautiful as if a golden creeper covered by blue clothes has been placed beside a Tamaal Tree (the catechu tree which is dark in colour). [Here, the ‘golden creeper’ symbolises goddess Laxmi, and the ‘black catechu plant’ to Lord Bindu Madhav representing Lord Vishnu. Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza no. 7; and verse no. 63, stanza no. 8.] (12).

When hundreds of Saraswatis (who is the patron goddess of speech), Sesh Naths (the thousand-tongued legendary serpent), and Vedas (the scriptures) together cannot describe this beauty and grandeur of the magnificent form of the Lord (Bindu Madhav)—then say, how can this dim-witted and dull (*matimanda*) Tulsidas, who is trapped in worldly delusions and confusions (*dvandarata*) can ever be able to sing (i.e. narrate) the glories, the beauty and the magnificence of this divine sight [Tulsidas means that though he has tried to do his best but he is not satisfied by his description of the Lord’s beauty and charming form. He finds himself incompetent and inept. But he says that it is not surprising because those who are expert in this sort of narration, such as goddess Saraswati who is the patron deity of speech, the thousand-tongued Seshnath who can extol the glory of Lord Vishnu with all these tongues simultaneously and is supposed to know more about Vishnu than anybody else because he always stays close to the Lord, and the Vedas that are renowned for their narrative ability, have all failed to do so. Hence, there is no wonder that Tulsidas isn’t able to describe how exactly beautiful the Lord is.] (13).

[Note—¹Lord Shiva worships Lord Ram, meditates upon the latter, and employs Lord Ram’s holy name as the medium to provide liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to those dying in Kashi (the terrestrial abode of Shiva) by uttering the Ram’s holy name in the ears of the dying person. Besides, the story of the ‘Ramayan’ which describes the worldly activities of Lord Vishnu as Lord Ram was also conceived by Lord Shiva first in his heart before this divine story became known to the rest of the world. All these facts have been explicitly stated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 15; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 30; (iv) Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 35; (v) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 111; (vi) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 51.

²Gajmukta—It is a secretion of the sebaceous glands on the head of an elephant. When it dries up it forms a bead as large as a big pearl. It is a very costly thing because of its rarity.

³According to astrology, the Navgrahas are the following—Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu.]

Rāga Jaitaśrī

(63)

मन इतनोई या तनुको परम फलु ।
 सब अँग सुभग बिन्दुमाधव-छबि, तजि सुभाव, अवलोकु एक पलु ॥1॥
 तरुन अरुन अंभोज चरन मृदु, नख-दुति हृदय-तिमिर-हारी ।
 कुलिस-केतु-जब-जलज रेख बर, अंकुस मन-गज-बसकारी ॥2॥
 कनक-जटित मनि नूपुर, मेखल, कटि-तट रटति मधुर बानी ।
 त्रिबली उदर, गँभीर नाभि सर, जहँ उपजे बिरंचि ग्यानी ॥3॥
 उर बनमाल, पदिक अति सोभित, बिप्र-चरन चित कहँ करषै ।
 स्याम तामरस-दाम-बरन बपु, पीत बसन सोभा बरषै ॥4॥
 कर कंकन केयूर मनोहर, देति मोद मुद्रिक न्यारी ।
 गदा कंज दर चारु चक्रधर, नाग-सुंड-सम भुज चारी ॥5॥
 कंबुग्रीव, छबिसीव चिबुक द्विज, अधर अरुन, उन्नत नासा ।
 नव राजीव नयन, ससि आनन, सेवक-सुखद बिसद हासा ॥6॥
 रुचिर कपोल, श्रवन कुंडल, सिर मुकुट, सुतिलक भाल भ्राजै ।
 ललित भृकुटि, सुंदर चितवनि, कच निरखि मधुप-अवली लाजै ॥7॥
 रूप-सील-गुन-खानि दच्छ दिसि, सिंधु-सुता रत-पद-सेवा ।
 जाकी कृपा-कटाच्छ चहत सिव, बिधि, मुनि, मनुज, दनुज, देवा ॥8॥
 तुलसिदास भव-त्रास मिटै तब, जब मति येहि सरूप अटकै ।
 नाहित दीन मलीन हीनसुख, कोटि जनम भ्रमि भ्रमि भटकै ॥9॥

(63)

mana itanōī yā tanukō parama phalu.

saba aṁga subhaga bindumādhava-chabi, taji subhāva, avalōku ēka palu. 1.
 taruna aruna ambhōja carana mṛdu, nakha-duti hṛdaya-timira-hārī.
 kulisa-kētu-jaba-jalaja rēkha bara, aṅkusa mana-gaja-basakārī. 2.
 kanaka-jaṭita mani nūpura, mēkhala, kaṭi-taṭa raṭati madhura bānī.
 tribalī udara, gaṁbhīra nābhi sara, jaham upajē birañci gyānī. 3.
 ura banamāla, padika ati sōbhita, bipra-carana cita kaham karaṣai.
 syāma tāmarasa-dāma-barana bapu, pīta basana sōbhā baraṣai. 4.
 kara kaṅkana kēyūra manōhara, dēti mōda mudrika n'yārī.
 gadā kañja dara cāru cakradhara, nāga-saṁuḍa-sama bhuja cārī. 5.
 kambugrīva, chabisīva cibuka dvija, adhara aruna, unnata nāsā.
 nava rājīva nayana, sasi ānana, sēvaka-sukhada bisada hāsā. 6.
 rucira kapōla, śravana kuṇḍala, sira mukuṭa, sutilaka bhāla bhrājai.
 lalita bhr̥kuṭi, sundara citavani, kaca nirakhi madhupa-avalī lājai. 7.
 rūpa-sīla-guna-khāni daccha disi, sindhu-sutā rata-pada-sēvā.
 jākī kṛpā-kaṭāccha cahata siva, bidhi, muni, manuja, danuja, dēvā. 8.
 tulasidāsa bhava-trāsa miṭai taba, jaba mati yēhi sarūpa aṭakai.
 nāhinta dīna malīna hīnasukha, kōṭi janama bhrami bhrami bhaṭakai. 9.

Verse no. 63—[In this verse, Tulsidas addresses himself and asks his mind to concentrate its attention on the divine form of Lord Vishnu as Lord Bindu Madhav. The reason why Tulsidas chose this deity for adoration is that its form is similar to that of Lord Vishnu though it is known by another name as 'Bindu Madhav'.]

'Oh mind! The only and best fruit of getting this human body is to have Darshan (divine sighting) of the captivating and enchanting view of Sri Bindu-Madhava's image from toe to head for even a second with steadiness and devotion after having overcome your natural habit of being unsteady and fickle.

[Refer: Verse no. 62, stanza no. 1. The mind is habituated to be fickle and restless. It is a common observance in any temple that except for a few worshippers, all the rest of the crowd that have gathered there purportedly for worshipping the deity are looking here and there and talking about so many things except for which they have come to the temple in the first place. It seems to be like an outing or a picnic for the majority. Tulsidas warns the mind against this and says that if one wishes to gain anything from visiting a shrine then he must first and foremost control his own mind. Otherwise this visit is a fruitless exercise.] (1).

His (Bindu-Madhav's) tender feet are akin to newly bloomed red lotus; the dazzle of the toe-nails are able to remove the darkness of ignorance of the heart. [Refer: Verse no. 62, stanza no. 3.]

The sole of the feet of the Lord has auspicious signs (lines) of the Vajara (thunderbolt; the weapon of Indra), the flag (standard) of Lord Vishnu (that has the emblem of the Eagle on it), a stalk of barley and a lotus flower, and the symbol of the goad (a spear) that is also marked on it is capable of controlling the mind that is like a wild elephant. [The 'mind' is compared to a wild, rogue elephant here, and the sign of the 'goad' on the feet of the Lord implies that if one surrenders himself to the Lord then his mind will automatically be controlled. In the opening lines of this verse, Tulsidas has already warned his mind to become alert and steady.] (2).

Golden, gem-studded anklets on the feet and the waist-band around the waist are chiming sweetly (pleasantly). [Refer: Verse no. 62, stanza no. 5.]

There are three lines (creases of the skin) on the abdomen, and the navel of the Lord is deep like a pond from where the wise Brahma (the creator) had emerged.

[According to legend, the 'creator Brahma' had emerged aloft a lotus flower with a long stem that sprouted from the navel of Lord Vishnu as the latter lay reclining on the coiled body of the celestial serpent Seshnath that floated on the surface of Kshirsagar, the heavenly ocean of milk, at the beginning of creation. The 'three lines on the abdomen' of Lord Vishnu represents the three dimensions of this creation—the upper world known as the heaven, the middle world known as the earth, and the lower world known as the nadir.] (3).

On the chest of the Lord lies the garland known as 'Vanmala' (flowers of marigold etc.), and at the center of it is a square pendant of gems which looks stunning by its beauty. The foot-print of sage Brighu, known as 'Srivasta', which appears as a mark on the chest of the Lord attracts the attention of all. The 'Pitambar' appears to shower glamour on his body which is like a garland of blue lotus flowers. [Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza nos. 2, 5; and verse no. 62, stanza nos. 6-7, 11.] (4).

The wrists have bracelets and the arms have armlets, while the rings (on the finger) are giving rare delight to the beholder. [Here obviously Tulsidas means himself because he is the one looking at the image of Lord Bindu Madhav.]

The four arms of the Lord are like the tusks of an elephant. [That is, the Lord's arms are long, strong, well-formed and smooth.]

They hold a mace, a lotus, a conch and a sharp-edged discus (which are characteristic symbols of Lord Vishnu) [Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza no. 3; and verse no. 62, stanza no. 8.] (5).

The Lord's conch-like neck is a limit of (or a bench-mark of) beauty. [Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza no. 4; and verse no. 62, stanza no. 8.]

The chin, teeth are also beautiful, while the pink lips, sharp nose, new lotus-like eyes, the moon-like countenance and the sweet smile bestows joy on the devotees. (6).

The Lord's cheeks are beautiful, while the ear-rings in the ear, crown or tiara on the head, and the Tilak mark on the forehead adorn the Lord and add charm to his form. The eye-brows are sharp and beautifully curved, glances are most endearing and pleasant, and rows of bumble-bees feel inferior when they are compared to the black curly hairs on the head of the Lord. [Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza no. 4 where black bees are cited.] (7).

Goddess Laxmi—who is the daughter of the ocean, a mine of virtues, nobility and beauty, and whose favour is coveted by even Lord Shiva, Brahma, sages, humans, demons and Gods—stays on the right side of the Lord and serves his feet. [Refer: Verse no. 61, stanza no. 7; and verse no. 62, stanza no. 12.] (8).

Tulsidas says that his fear of the mundane world can only be eliminated if his wisdom and intellect attaches themselves to (i.e. meditate upon) this beautiful and enchanting image (of Lord Bindu Madhav). Otherwise he would be wandering aimlessly in this world for millions of births, being wretched, miserable, weak, meek and devoid of all happiness and contentedness every time he is born (i.e. in each of his births). [Here, Tulsidas advises his mind to meditate upon the divine form of Lord Bindu Madhav in a symbolic manner because it resembles the form of Lord Vishnu. It ought to be noted here that Tulsidas is actually adoring his Lord Sri Ram in the form of Bindu Madhav because Tulsidas was a great devotee of Lord Ram and he worshipped no other deity except Lord Ram. For him, the whole creation and all manifestations of the Lord are the different forms of Lord Ram.] (9).

Glory of Śrī Rāma

Rāga Basanta

(64)

बंदौ रघुपति करुना—निधान। जाते छूटै भव—भेद ग्यान॥१॥

रघुबंस-कुमुद-सुखप्रद निसेस । सेवत पद-पंकज अज-महेस ॥2॥
 निज भक्त-हृदय-पाथोज-भृंग । लावन्य बपुष अगनित अनंग ॥3॥
 अति प्रबल मोह-तम-मारतंड । अग्यान-गहन-पावक प्रचंड ॥4॥
 अभिमान-सिंधु-कुंभज उदार । सुररंजन, भंजन भूमिभार ॥5॥
 रागादि-सर्पगन-पन्नगारि । कंदर्प-नाग-मृगपति, मुरारि ॥6॥
 भव-जलधि-पोत चरनारबिंद । जानकी-रवन आनंद-कंद ॥7॥
 हनुमंत-प्रेम-बापी-मराल । निष्काम कामधुक गो दयाल ॥8॥
 त्रैलोक-तिलक, गुनगहन राम । कह तुलसिदास विश्राम-धाम ॥9॥

(64)

bandaum raghupati karunā-nidhāna. jātē chūṭai bhava-bhēda gyāna. 1.
 raghubansa-kumuda-sukhaprada nisēsa. sēvata pada-paṅkaja aja-mahēsa. 2.
 nija bhakta-hṛdaya-pāthōja-bhaṁrga. lāvan'ya bapuṣa aganita anaṅga. 3.
 ati prabala mōha-tama-māratanda. agyāna-gahana-pāvaka pracaṇḍa. 4.
 abhimāna-sindhu-kumbhaja udāra. suraranjana, bhaṅjana bhūmibhāra. 5.
 rāgādi-sarpagana-pannagāri . kandarpa-nāga-mṛgapati, murāri. 6.
 bhava-jaladhi-pōta caranārabinda. jānakī-ravana ānanda-kanda. 7.
 hanumanta-prēma-bāpī-marāla . niṣkāma kāmadhuka gō dayāla. 8.
 trailōka-tilaka, gunagahana rāma. kaha tulasidāsa viśrāma-dhāma. 9.

Verse no. 64—I pray to Lord Sri Ram, who is an abode of mercy (bandaum raghupati karunā-nidhāna), so that I am able to get rid of the sense of duality and perception of differences in this world (jātē chūṭai bhava-bhēda gyāna).

[To wit, I pray to the merciful Lord to bless me with wisdom and enlightenment so that I may overcome all delusions and confusions associated with this gross world. Let me become wise and enlightened enough to realise that the ultimate Truth of life and creation is one and the same, and whatever difference there appears between any two given situations or things is because a person sees their gross forms and not their essential form which would enlighten him about the truth. Oh Lord Ram, please free me from all the confusions and delusions that arise out of this dilemma.] (1).

Lord Sri Ram gives glory to the noble family of king Raghu (of the dynasty which ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya where he was born) just like the full moon which helps the lily flower to bloom with its full majestic beauty under its light (raghubansa-kumuda-sukhaprada nisēsa).

Even Brahma (the creator) and Shiva (the concluder) serve Lord Ram's holy lotus-like feet and worship the Lord (sēvata pada-paṅkaja aja-mahēsa). (2).

Lord Ram resides in the heart of his devotee just like a bumble-bee finds its peaceful rest in the lotus flower (nija bhakta-hṛdaya-pāthōja-bhaṁrga)¹.

The charm, elegance, grace and extreme beauty of the Lord's form is comparable to numerous Kamdeos (who is a god personifying these qualities) (lāvan'ya bapuṣa aganita anaṅga). (3).

Lord Ram is like a sun for the purpose of destroying the terrible darkness arising out of delusions and confusions, bewildments and attachments (*ati prabala mōha-tama-māratanda*).

The Lord is like a fire for the purpose of destruction of the dense forest of ignorance (*agyāna-gahana-pāvaka pracaṇḍa*). (4).

Lord Ram is like the generous sage Agastya for drying-up the ocean² of pride, vanity, ego, hypocrisy, haughtiness etc. (*abhimāna-sindhu-kumbhaja udāra*).

The Lord is the provider of happiness, succour, joy, relief to the Gods (*suraranjana*). And the Lord is the remover of the burden of the earth by vanquishing the demons³ (who represent all sorts of evil, vices and sins in this world) (*bhanjana bhūmibhāra*). (5).

Lord Ram is like Garuda (the Eagle, the king of birds and the mount of Lord Vishnu) for swallowing the serpent-like⁴ negative qualities such as attachments, envy, jealousy, confusions, discord etc. (*rāgādi-sarpagana-pannagāri*).

The Lord is like a lion for the purpose of killing (eliminating, vanquishing, defeating) elephant-like desires, passions, lust etc. (*kandarpa-nāga-mṛgapati*).

And the Lord is the slayer of the demon named Mur (and hence he is also called ‘Murari’) (*murāri*). (6).

Lord Ram, who is Janki’s (Sita’s) beloved husband (*jānakī-ravana*) and whose holy lotus-like feet are like ships that help one to cross this world which is like a huge ocean (*bhava-jaladhi-pōta caranārabinda*), is indeed like a root from which all joys and happiness emerge (*ānanda-kanda*). (7).

Lord Ram always swims like a swan in the pond represented by devotion and affection that Hanuman had for him⁵ (*hanumanta-prēma-bāpī-marāla*).

The Lord is like a most merciful and benevolent Kamdhenu cow⁶ for his selfless devotees who serve him without any desires (for rewards) (*niṣkāma kāmadhuka gō dayāla*).

[This 2nd paragraph can also be interpreted as follows: The Lord is most merciful and benevolent like the selfless Kamdhenu cow for all his devotees because the Lord takes care of them and fulfils all their wishes like this cow, without expecting anything in return.] (8).

Tulsidas therefore asserts (*kaha tulasidāsa*) that Lord Sri Ram, who is the glory and the most exalted Lord of the three worlds (subterranean, terrestrial, celestial; the past, the present and the future worlds—“*trailōka-tilaka*”) and an endless treasury or source of excellent and the best of auspicious virtues (*gunagahana rāma*), is the only place (abode) of peace, happiness and tranquility for the creature (*viśrāma-dhāma*).

[To wit, if someone wants to find real peace and happiness then he must take shelter and refuge with the Lord.] (9).

[Note—¹The bee and the lotus have a very especial relationship with each other. The lotus offers the bee an interminable source of nectar, and the bee loves the lotus so much that once it alights on a flower to suck this nectar it prefers to stick to it. The bee forgets about its surroundings and everything else as long as it remains sitting on

the petals of the lotus, enjoying the charm of its company. On its part, the lotus loves its contact with the bee and makes no effort to drive it away. Rather, the lotus feels most lucky if a bee hovers over it and spends a lot of time sitting on it drinking its nectar. On the other hand, if there is some old lotus flower from which nectar has been dried up and no bee wishes to alight on it, then this flower feels dejected and sorry for itself.

In this metaphor, the heart of the devotee is like the lotus flower, the devotion that he has for the Lord is the nectar, and the Lord himself is like the bee.

Compare this with stanza no. 8 where it is said that Lord Ram is like a 'swan' that floats in the virtues of devotion and affection that Hanuman has for the Lord.

²According to legend, sage Agastya had drunk the entire ocean in a few gulps and without any efforts. Hence, this incident is cited here to emphasise that in a likewise manner, Lord Ram can remove such negativities as pride, vanity, ego, hypocrisy, haughtiness in a person.

³The earth and its inhabitants were being terrorised by the demons. So, earth assumed the form of a cow and along with all the other gods who were also victims of the terror of demons prayed to Lord Vishnu to save them. Then, the Lord promised them that he will come down as Sri Ram and remove the source of their grief—i.e. the Lord will eliminate the demons and give relief to the earth and the gods. Refer: Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 184—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 187.

⁴Garud is a sworn enemy of serpents. There is a Upanishad named 'Garud Upanishad' which gives certain Mantras or divine formula which helps one overcome the deathly effects of snake bite. In fact it is believed that if one recites this Upanishad and its Mantras he is freed from the fear of snakes. It is narrated in the epic Ramayan that during the war of Lanka when the demon Meghnad had tied Lord Ram in a snare of snakes that emerged miraculously from an arrow shot at the Lord by the demon, the Lord had invoked Garud who came to the battle-field instantly and gobbled up all the snakes, thereby freeing the Lord. Refer: Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 11-12 that precede Doha no. 73, and Doha no. 74 ka along with its preceding Chaupai line no. 10.

⁵Compare this metaphor with the one in stanza no. 3 which says that Lord Ram is like a bee which resides in the lotus-like heart of devotees. It is to be noted here that these virtues of devotion and affection have their origin in the heart. So these two stanzas are correlated.

⁶The Kamdhenu cow is the all wish-fulfilling cow. So this metaphor means that Lord Ram always fulfils all the desires of his devotees. But the caveat is that the devotee should serve the Lord without any desire, or 'selflessly'. It means that if the devotee serves the Lord without any expectations, the Lord takes it upon himself as his responsibility to ensure that the devotee lacks nothing even though the latter asks for nothing. It is indeed very clever for a devotee to ask nothing—because then the Lord feels that whatever he has done for the devotee is much less than what he should have actually done for the devotee, and that the devotee is not complaining out of modesty. Therefore the Lord feels that he is obliged to do more. But on the other hand, if the devotee expressly states what he wants then the Lord would be satisfied by fulfilling the devotee's wishes and that will be the end of it. So therefore, the devotee not wanting anything makes the Lord give him all the more so that the devotee is left with no chance of feeling shortage of anything. After doing everything, the Lord stills feels that he should do more for the devotee.]

Rāga Bhairava

(65)

राम राम रमु, राम राम रटु, राम राम जपु जीहा ।
 रामनाम—नवनेह—मेहको, मन! हठि होहि पपीहा ।।1।।
 सब साधन—फल कूप—सरित—सर, सागर—सलिल—निरासा ।
 राम—नाम—रति—स्वाति—सुधा—सुभ सीकर प्रेमपियासा ।।2।।
 गरजि, तरजि, पाषान बरषि पवि, प्रीति परखि जिय जानै ।
 अधिक अधिक अनुराग उमँग उर, पर परमिति पहिचानै ।।3।।
 रामनाम—गति, रामनाम—मति, रामनाम—अनुरागी ।
 है गये हैं, जे होहिंगे, तेइ त्रिभुवन गनियत बड़भागी ।।4।।
 एक अंग मग अगमु गवन कर, बिलमु न छिन छिन छाहैं ।
 तुलसी हित अपनो अपनी दिसि, निरुपधि नेम निबाहैं ।।5।।

(65)

rāma rāma ramu, rāma rāma raṭu, rāma rāma japu jīhā.
 rāmanāma-navanēha-mēhakō, mana! haṭhi hōhi papīhā. 1.
 saba sādhana-phala kūpa-sarita-sara, sāgara-salila-nirāsā.
 rāma-nāma-rati-svāti-sudhā-subha sīkara prēmapiyāsā. 2.
 garaji, taraji, pāṣāna baraṣi pavi, prīti parakhi jiya jānai.
 adhika adhika anurāga umamṅga ura, para paramiti pahicānai. 3.
 rāmanāma-gati, rāmanāma-mati, rāmanāma-anurāgī.
 hvai gayē haim, jē hōhiṅgē, tē'i tribhuvana ganiyata barābhāgī. 4.
 ēka aṅga maga agamu gavana kara, bilamu na china china chāhaim.
 tulasī hita apanō apanī disī, nirupadhi nēma nibāhaim. 5.

Verse no. 65—Oh Tongue (jīhā)! You should always be talking about Lord Ram and remain involved in singing the Lord's glories (rāma rāma ramu); you should always be chanting the holy Name 'Ram' of the Lord (rāma rāma raṭu); and you should always be repeating the holy Mantra of Lord Ram constantly (rāma rāma japu).

Oh my Mind and Heart (mana)! Be determined like a Papiha (the sparrow hawk) (haṭhi hōhi papīhā) and be enamoured of the fresh rain-bearing cloud represented by the virtues of devotion and affection for the holy name of Lord Ram just like this bird is of the cloud that bears rain (rāmanāma-navanēha-mēhakō).

[Oh my dear Mana, think of nothing else except Lord Ram's holy name and fix your attention on it just like the Papiha bird fixes its attention exclusively on the rain giving cloud. This bird is renowned for its undiluted love for the rain-bearing cloud, and it drinks only the rain drops that fall down from the cloud directly into its beak. Otherwise, the bird prefers to remain thirsty and would rather die than to drink water from any other source. Tulsidas cites the example of this bird's love for the cloud to stress that he also desires to develop sincere and deep devotion, affection and love for the Lord with the same intensity and sincerity as that of the Papiha. He would seek whatever is to be sought exclusively from Lord Ram and his holy Name.] (1).

Even as a Papiha shuns the water of wells, rivers, ponds and even an ocean to quench its thirst, and remains eager to get even a single drop of rain water that its beloved cloud gives directly to it during the Swati Nakshatra (which is a special configuration of stars occurring between August-September), so should you (i.e. the tongue and the Mana) also avoid the hope of satisfying yourself by any other means except by concentrating exclusively and solely on the nectar-like drops of spiritual bliss that are obtained by constant repetition of Lord Ram's holy name and focusing the attention on the Lord (*saba sādhanā-phala kūpa-sarita-sara, sāgara-salila-nirāsā. rāma-nāma-rati-svāti-sudhā-subha sīkara prēmapiyāsā*). (2).

The lover cloud growls, admonishes, showers hail and strikes the loving Papiha with a thunderbolt (*garaji, taraji, pāṣāna baraṣi pavi*). In this way when the cloud determines that the unshakeable, eternal and measureless love of the Papiha (*prīti parakhi jiya jānai*), even after subjecting it to the most rigorous of tests, goes on increasing steadily in its heart with each test and none of its rebukes diminishes the bird's devotion for it even a whit (*adhika adhika anurāga umamṅga ura*), then only does it graciously oblige the bird with the much sought-after drops of rain water that it puts directly into the bird's mouth as a token of acknowledgement of mutual love and respect for each other (*para paramiti pahicānai*).

[To wit, the cloud firsts tests the sincerity of the bird's love and devotion for it by subjecting it to rigorous tests. When it is satisfied that the bird would not budge from its determination then only the cloud showers it with its own love in the form of the rain. Similarly, a devotee is first tested by the Lord about his sincerity of devotion and love as well as his faith in the Lord by subjecting him to apparent neglect and hardships. The trick here is that the devotee should learn to have patience and perseverance. When the Lord finds that the devotee is unwavering in his love and devotion for the Lord, and would cope with everything in order to get the Lord's grace, then the doors of the Lord's treasury of mercy and grace is wide opened for him.] (3).

In a similar fashion (no matter what tribulations, ordeals, torments, agonies, troubles and miseries come to test your sincerity and steadfastness), you should also take refuge in the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram as your last destination (*rāmanāma-gati*), keep your mind, sub-conscious and intellect focused on the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram (*rāmanāma-mati*), and develop sincere love and affection for the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram (*rāmanāma-anurāgi*).

Such devotees who depend on Lord Ram's Name, whether in the past, the present or the future, should be considered as the one who is most privileged, lucky and fortunate in the entire world and its three levels or dimensions (*hvai gayē hairṁ, jē hōhīṅgē, tē'i tribhuvana ganiyata barābhāgi*).

[The phrase 'three levels of the world' has many connotations—such as the past, the present and the future. It also means the terrestrial world, the celestial world and the nether world, as well as the present world, the world after death, and the world of the previous birth.] (4).

This path (of having unflinching, unwavering and sincere love for Lord Ram's holy name) is lonely and very difficult to follow because there are many distractions and hardships encountered enroute (*ēka aṅga maga agamu gavana kara*). So, once you step on this path, do not stop even momentarily to take rest under a shade (i.e. to

enjoy the pleasures of the objects of this materialistic world as you would get deluded and miss your objective) (bilamu na china china chāhaim).

Oh Tulsidas (tulasī)! Your welfare lies in keeping your allegiance to the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram without having any deceit, pretensions, crookedness, cunning, trickery and deception in your mind (hita apanō apanī disi, nirupadhi nēma nibāhaim). [That is, your welfare is ensured only if you have sincere devotion for Lord Ram's holy and divine Name.] (5).

[Note—In this verse, Tulsidas compares Lord Ram to the rain-bearing cloud, the Lord's holy name to the rain drops, the spiritual bliss, joy and sustenance that one derives from the Lord's glorious name to the joy, happiness and rejuvenation that the bird Papiha gets by drinking the rain drops, and the devotee of the Lord, who in this particular case is Tulsidas himself, to the bird Papiha itself.

Even as the Papiha loves the cloud so much that it has taken a vow that it would depend solely on it for quenching its thirst by dropping rain drops directly into its beak, a devotee of Lord Ram also depends directly on the grace of the Lord for all his needs, whether they are related to the temporal world or to the spiritual world. A true devotee of the Lord would rather die than go somewhere else to seek what he wants.

In this devotion for the cloud the Papiha is more often than not subjected to extreme sufferings as it is hit by hail falling from the same cloud it loves so much, is made to get affrightened by the deafening sound of the rupturous thunder and the blinding light of the streak of lightening striking all over the sky to indicate that the cloud is annoyed with its constant display of love for it by fixing its gaze on the cloud and nagging it for rain water—but none of these things deters the Papiha from expressing its love and devotion for the cloud.

The sacrifice of the Papiha does not in vain for finally a time comes when the overwhelmed cloud feels ashamed of itself for being so harsh with its lover who would rather court death than abandon its love for its beloved, and so the cloud lovingly puts the rain drops directly into the mouth of the bird. The wonderful part is that this rain, which is meant for the Papiha, not only benefits a particular bird but a whole generation of living beings on this planet as the cloud pours and pours its rain on earth as a token of largesse and charity to show how grateful it is to the Papiha for its love for the former.

Likewise, when a single devotee sacrifices his life for the sake of love and devotion for Lord Ram and is abundantly rewarded by the Lord, it sets an example for countless others who see this as an example for their own redemption, as a light of hope at the end of the dark tunnel for themselves.

This verse lays the basic foundation for the theme that forms the underlying current in the majority of the verses that follow below in this marvellous Book called Vinai Patrika wherein Tulsidas has repeatedly stressed that no matter how much he has to suffer he would still seek to surrender before Lord Ram and ask for his mercy, for it is sure that the Lord, who is so merciful and compassionate, is only testing his sincerity by being stern in the beginning, and would soon redeem him if he passes the rigorous test of devotion, faith and love for the Lord.]

घोर भव—नीर—निधि नाम निज नाव रे ।।1।।
 एक ही साधन सब रिद्धि—सिद्धि साधि रे ।
 ग्रसे कलि—रोग जोग—संजम—समाधि रे ।।2।।
 भलो जो है, पोच जो है, दाहिनो जो, बाम रे ।
 राम—नाम ही सों अंत सब ही को काम रे ।।3।।
 जग नभ—बाटिका रही है फलि फूलि रे ।
 धुवाँ कैसे धौरहर देखि तू न भूलि रे ।।4।।
 राम—नाम छाड़ि जो भरोसो करै और रे ।
 तुलसी परोसो त्यागि माँगै कूर कौर रे ।।5।।

(66)

rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu bāvarē.
 ghōra bhava-nīra-nidhi nāma nija nāva rē. 1.
 ēka hī sādhana saba rid'dhi-sid'dhi sādhi rē.
 grasē kali-rōga jōga-sanjama-samādhi rē. 2.
 bhalō jō hai, pōca jō hai, dāhinō jō, bāma rē.
 rāma-nāma hī sōm anta saba hī kō kāma rē. 3.
 jaga nabha-bāṭikā rahī hai phali phūli rē.
 dhuvām̐ kaisē dhaurahara dēkhi tū na bhūli rē. 4.
 rāma-nāma chāḍi jō bharōsō karai aura rē.
 tulasī parōsō tyāgi māṁgai kūra kaura rē. 5.

Verse no. 66—[Note :- The use of the Hindi word ‘rē’ as in *ray* at the end of each sentence indicates earnest and sincere plea by the loving teacher to convince a rather naughty, stubborn and reluctant disciple to mend his ways, and pay heed to what is being said, lest he would repent later.]

Oh you fool (bāvarē)! Chant Lord Sri Ram's holy Name “RAM” repeatedly; I repeat and stress it—do it (rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu).

It is the only boat we have to ferry us across this worldly ocean (i.e. this is the easiest way to achieve salvation as it is easily available, simplest and accessible to all) (ghōra bhava-nīra-nidhi nāma nija nāva rē) (1).

You can master all virtues and acquire all knowledge with the help of this single medium alone (ēka hī sādhana saba rid'dhi-sid'dhi sādhi rē) because Yoga (meditation and contemplation), self-control and self-restraint) and Samadhi (a state of meditative trance) etc. have been all eclipsed by the era of Kali (i.e. all other mediums for salvation or liberation of the soul have been over-shadowed or obscured by the evil presence of Kali, and therefore they aren't available) (grasē kali-rōga jōga-sanjama-samādhi rē).

[To wit, you will do yourself a great favour by relying on the Lord's holy Name for your emancipation and salvation because it is easily available to you and would help you to achieve success in all your spiritual endeavours with the least effort and a surety of success that no other method can ever guarantee to you.] (2).

In the end (*sōm anta*), the holy Name of Lord Ram is the only hope for redemption, it is the only hope for attainment of liberation and deliverance for all of us (*rāma-nāma hī saba hī kō kāma rē*), whether it is bad or good, upside down or up, i.e. whether chanted backwards or forwards, willingly or unwillingly, with or without faith, conviction and belief—it will only do you good, and be rest assured about it (*bhalō jō hai, pōca jō hai, dāhinō jō, bāma rē*).

[To wit, it would make no sense in arguing about its worth or worthiness, or whether it is a good spiritual formula or not. It is a wasteful exercise in wasting time and energy in this debate. After all, this holy name is a time-tested remedy for all spiritual problems and it is like a boat that takes you across the ocean of transmigration with its attendant miseries and horrors. A patient is more concerned about the cure of his illness rather than in discussing the countless options that are available to the doctor for the cure of his disease. The scriptures and great sages and saints have unanimously held that Lord Ram's holy Name is the single-window where a creature can find an answer for his problems, and is a single path that leads directly to liberation and deliverance from this gross mortal world of transmigration. So, it is wiser to pay heed and take the shelter of the Lord's holy and divine Name.

All other paths prescribed in the scriptures are helpful, but they are fraught with dangers of different kinds and magnitudes, involve too many rigid procedures and require careful diligence so much so that they become too arduous and difficult to follow for a common man. On the other hand, Lord Ram's holy Name is so easy to say that one can repeat it any time of the day and in any manner he likes, without bothering about formalities. The goal is thus easily reached without having to endure any pain and suffering.] (3).

This world is like an illusion of seeing a blossoming garden in the sky—it is a mirage, it is a delusion, it is something that is totally fake (*jāga nabha-bāṭikā rahī hai phali phūli rē*).

All the materials and sense objects in this world are castles and palaces of smoke—here now and gone the next moment (*dhuvām̐ kaisē dhaurahara dēkhi tū na bhūli rē*). [To wit, don't go astray believing the world to be real—it is a total illusion, a mirage. So, focus your attention on the supreme Reality and the supreme Truth instead of getting distracted by false charms of the gross mortal world.] (4).

[Here, Tulsidas warns the creature not to be misled by the temptations of the material world and the attractions of its charming sense objects for all of them are like a fabulous castle seen in the sky, or like the water seen in the mirage on hot sand in a desert. Expecting any worthwhile thing from them is absolute nonsense.]

Tulsidas says that one who relies and depends on others, and not on the holy Name of Lord Ram (*rāma-nāma chāḍi jō bharōsō karai aura rē*), is like a fool who leaves the food in front of him and begs for it from house to house like a dog (*tulasī parōsō tyāgi mām̐gai kūra kaura rē*).

[To wit, the medium of emancipation and salvation is in front of you—so why do you search for it somewhere else like a hungry dog foraging for food and nibbling at leftovers from door to door?] (5).

[Note: This verse is very popular with the people.]

(67)

राम राम जपु जिय सदा सानुराग रे।
 कलि न बिराग, जोग, जाग, तप, त्याग रे॥1॥
 राम सुमिरत सब बिधि हीको राज रे।
 रामको बिसारिबो निषेध—सिरताज रे॥2॥
 राम—नाम महामनि, फनि जगजाल रे।
 मनि लिये फनि जियै, ब्याकुल बिहाल रे॥3॥
 राम—नाम कामतरु देत फल चारि रे।
 कहत पुरान, बेद, पंडित, पुरारि रे॥4॥
 राम—नाम प्रेम—परमारथको सार रे।
 राम—नाम तुलसीको जीवन—अधार रे॥5॥

(67)

rāma rāma japu jiya sadā sānurāga rē.
 kali na birāga, jōga, jāga, tapa, tyāga rē. 1.
 rāma sumirata saba bidhi hīkō rāja rē.
 rāmakō bisāribō niṣēdha-siratāja rē. 2.
 rāma-nāma mahāmani, phani jagajāla rē.
 mani liyē phani jiyai, byākula bihāla rē. 3.
 rāma-nāma kāmataru dēta phala cāri rē.
 kahata purāna, bēda, paṇḍita, purāri rē. 4.
 rāma-nāma prēma-paramārathakō sāra rē.
 rāma-nāma tulasīkō jīvana-adhāra rē. 5.

Verse no. 67—[Note :- As if Tulsidas' plea to chant Lord Ram's holy Name could not fully convince his audience, in this verse he continues the argument further, and concludes citing the Vedas and the Purans as his authority.]

Oh Creature! Repeat (chant) Lord Ram's holy Name with abiding and sincere love and devotion in your heart (rāma rāma japu jiya sadā sānurāga rē), for besides Lord Ram's holy Name, nothing (e.g. emancipation, salvation, bliss, tranquility) can be achieved in this era of Kaliyug merely by having Vairagya (renunciation), or by doing Yoga (meditation), Yagya (fire sacrifices and other religious practices), Tapa (austerities and penances), and Daan (making charities and giving of alms) (kali na birāga, jōga, jāga, tapa, tyāga rē). (1).

In the scriptures, clear instructions are laid down as to what should or should not be done (i.e. what constitutes Dharma and Adharma, good deeds and evil/bad deeds) in order to attain one's objective.

But in my (Tulsidas') view, remembering Lord Ram's holy Name is the king among laws and the only secret to attain ones' spiritual objectives (rāma sumirata saba bidhi hīkō rāja rē), and forgetting the Lord and his holy Name is the worst

form of evil deed that can be done by a creature (*rāmakō bisāribō niṣēdha-siratāja rē*). (2).

[The scriptures have laid stress on doing deeds to achieve one's goals. Nothing is achieved by sitting idly doing nothing. Since one has to do something to achieve one's goals, why not do something that has no risk factor and is sure to provide success instead of trying other risky paths that are not only cumbersome, require so much effort but are also fraught with the danger of failure. This easy, effortless and sure-shot path is repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and taking the shelter of the Lord for all needs.]

This world is like a serpent and Lord Ram's holy Name is like a Mani (a luminous sac on the hood of a serpent which glows in the darkness) (*rāma-nāma mahāmani, phani jagajāla rē*).

Even as the snake cannot survive when one takes away this Mani from it (*mani liyē phani jiyai*), so does the world of interminable sorrows, grief and miseries vanish (cannot survive) on taking Lord Ram's holy Name (*byākula bihāla rē*) (3).

Ah! This holy Name of Lord Ram is a Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree) which gives the celebrated four fruits of 'Artha' (prosperity and wealth), 'Dharma' (righteousness), 'Kaam' (fulfillment of desires) and 'Moksha' (liberation and final deliverance; emancipation and salvation) (*rāma-nāma kāmataru dēta phala cāri rē*).

This fact is declared, endorsed and ratified by the Vedas, the Purans, the Pandit (wise and expert teachers of spiritual laws), and Lord Shiva (*kahata purāna, bēda, paṇḍita, purāri rē*) (4).

Lord Ram's holy Name is the essence of the virtues of devotion and love for the Lord, as well as of spiritual welfare and well-being of the soul in this world (*rāma-nāma prēma-paramārathakō sāra rē*).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram is the very foundation that supports Tulsidas' life, without which he wouldn't be able to survive, and is a source of his well-being (*rāma-nāma tulasikō jīvana-adhāra rē*) (5).

(68)

राम राम राम जीह जौलौ तू न जपिहै।
 तौलौ, तू कहूँ जाय, तिहूँ ताप तपिहै॥1॥
 सुरसरि—तीर बिनु नीर दुख पाइहै।
 सुरतरु तरे तोहि दारिद सताइहै॥2॥
 जागत, बागत, सपने न सुख सोइहै।
 जनम जनम, जुग जुग जग रोइहै॥3॥
 छूटिबेके जतन बिसेष बाँधो जायगो।
 हैहै बिष भोजन जो सुधा—सानि खायगो॥4॥
 तुलसी तिलोक, तिहूँ काल तोसे दीनको।
 रामनाम ही की गति जैसे जल मीनको॥5॥

(68)

rāma rāma rāma jīha jaulaum̐ tū na japihai.
 taulau, tū kahūm̐ jāya, tihūm̐ tāpa tapihai. 1.
 surasari-tīra binu nīra dukha pā'ihai.
 surataru tarē tōhi dārida satā'ihai. 2.
 jāgata, bāgata, sapanē na sukha sō'ihai.
 janama janama, juga juga jaga rō'ihai. 3.
 chūṭibēkē jatana bisēṣa bām̐dhō jāyagō.
 hvaihai biṣa bhōjana jō sudhā-sāni khāyagō. 4.
 tulasī tilōka, tihūm̐ kāla tōsē dīnakō.
 rāmanāma hī kī gati jaisē jala mīnakō. 5.

Verse no. 68—[Note :- Tulsidas warns in this verse what kind of fate awaits us if we do not heed him].

Admonishing the creature, Tulsidas warns—‘Oh, listen you Creature (jīha)! Till the time (taulau) you don’t chant Lord Ram’s holy Name repeatedly (rāma rāma rāma jaulaum̐ tū na japihai), you can never find peace anywhere—and will continue to burn with the fire of the Traitap (tū kahūm̐ jāya, tihūm̐ tāpa tapihai).

[The Traitap is the torment that a creature is subjected to because of the following three—(i) Adhyatmik—spiritual problems; (ii) Adhibhautik—problems arising due to existential life in this world; and (iii) Adhidaivik—problems arising due to malignant stars and gods.] (1).

You will be thirsty even while being on the banks of the holy river Ganges (surasari-tīra binu nīra dukha pā'ihai), and poverty shall torment you even while you are staying under the Kalpa Tree (surataru tarē tōhi dārida satā'ihai) (2).

You would never rest in peace—waking, sleeping or dreaming (jāgata, bāgata, sapanē na sukha sō'ihai).

You would have to weep (lament, regret) in this world in all your births, always, and in all the eras in which you take birth (janama janama, juga juga jaga rō'ihai).

[Tulsidas advises the creature that if he does not take the help of Lord Ram’s holy Name, he would continue to suffer interminably for all times to come. His condition would be so ironic that he would be like a foolish person who dies of thirst even while living on the banks of the holy river Ganges.] (3).

The more you try other methods for liberation and deliverance, the greater will be your entanglement in this world (because you are far away from Lord Ram’s holy Name) (chūṭibēkē jatana bisēṣa bām̐dhō jāyagō).

Even the Amrit (which is the delicious drink that gives immortality) would turn poison for you (hvaihai biṣa bhōjana jō sudhā-sāni khāyagō) (4).

Tulsidas says about himself that for a humble person like him (tulasī tōsē dīnakō), in all the three Lokas (subterranean, terrestrial, celestial) and all the three periods (past, present, future) (tilōka, tihūm̐ kāla), Lord Ram’s holy Name is the only destination

and habitat, and it has the same importance as the water has for a fish (rāmanāma hī kī gati jaisē jala mīnakō).

[Even as a fish cannot survive without water, Tulsidas can't live without Ram's Name. The water is the fish's natural habitat, and it finds joy and complete rest while being in it. Likewise, Tulsidas says that the Lord's holy Name is his only destination and provider of joy and happiness.] (5).

(69)

सुमिरु सनेहसों तू नाम रामरायको ।
 संबल निसंबलको, सखा असहायको ॥1॥
 भाग है अभागेहूको, गुन गुनहीनको ।
 गाहक गरीबको, दयालु दानि दीनको ॥2॥
 कुल अकुलीनको, सुन्यो है बेद साखि है ।
 पाँगुरेको हाथ-पाँय, आँधरेको आँखि है ॥3॥
 माय-बाप भूखेको, अधार निराधारको ।
 सेतु भव-सागरको, हेतु सुखसारको ॥4॥
 पतितपावन राम-नाम सो न दूसरो ।
 सुमिरि सुभूमि भयो तुलसी सो ऊसरो ॥5॥

(69)

sumiru sanēhasōm tū nāma rāmarāyakō.
 sambala nisambalakō, sakhā asahāyakō. 1.
 bhāga hai abhāgēhūkō, guna gunahīnakō.
 gāhaka garībakō, dayālu dāni dīnakō. 2.
 kula akulīnakō, sun'yō hai bēda sākhi hai.
 pām̐gurēkō hātha-pām̐ya, ām̐dharēkō ām̐khi hai. 3.
 māya-bāpa bhūkhēkō, adhāra nirādhārakō.
 sētu bhava-sāgarakō, hētu sukhasārakō. 4.
 patitapāvana rāma-nāma sō na dūsarō.
 sumiri subhūmi bhayō tulasī sō ūsarō. 5.

Verse no. 69—[Note :- After explaining the importance and value of Ram's holy and divine Name in earlier verses, here Tulsidas emphasises its utility for all creatures in this world, citing the pair of opposites to illustrate his point].

‘Oh Creature, listen! You must always remember Lord Ram's holy Name with the greatest of love and devotion you can command (sumiru sanēhasōm tū nāma rāmarāyakō) as his name is strength and power of those who have no other strength or power of any kind (sambala nisambalakō), and is the best friend of those who are helpless and hapless (sakhā asahāyakō) (1).

This holy Name of Lord Ram is the luck of luck-less (bhāga hai abhāgēhūkō), and is the grand virtue, quality and talent for those who do not have any worthiness in

them (*guna gunahīnakō*). [To wit, those who chant Lord Ram's holy Name are bestowed with good luck and wisdom, and the otherwise worthless creature becomes someone respected and sought after by the world.]

It is like a merchant who respects even the poor (customer) (*gāhaka garībakō*), and is merciful towards the downtrodden, the deprived and the distressed (*dayālu dāni dīnakō*). [Such a merchant is respected in the society as compared to one who is selfish.]¹ (2).

[¹The 2nd line of this stanza can be interpreted differently to explain its meaning better as follows: “The holy Name of Lord Ram is so valuable and magical in its effect that those who possess it become like a valuable customer is for a merchant, though he may be otherwise poor in the sense that he lacks any other quality or virtue in him. When a merchant sees a rich customer he goes all out to woo him and offers him the best of the merchandise he has to offer. Likewise, when a luck-less and poverty stricken person repeats the holy Name of Lord Ram, he is warmly welcome and shown great respect in this world wherever he goes inspite of the fact that he has no other qualities in him nor has he done any other religiously meritorious deeds that would ordinary invite such honour.

Similarly, a person who possesses the asset in the form of Lord Ram's holy Name becomes empowered to grant blessings to others as if he was a rich person who would liberally give charity to all those who come seeking something from him. This also invites respect for him in this world.”]

It is heard and even the Vedas are witness to it (*sun'yō hai bēda sākhi hai*) that those who have a low birth and are downtrodden since birth, the holy Name of Lord Ram is able to lift them to an exalted stature where they get the same honour and respect that those born in a higher caste or have a noble pedigree are entitled to get (*kula akulīnakō*).

[To wit, even a low-caste-born is to be considered a high-caste-born if he chants the holy Name of Lord Ram.]

Lord Ram's holy Name is akin to the limbs of a lame (*pāmḡgurēkō hātha-pāmḡya*), and eyes for the blind (*āmḡdharēkō āmḡkhi hai*) (3).

This holy Name of Lord Ram is like a parent for the hungry (for a hungry man is sure to find food in the house of his parents) (*māya-bāpa bhūkhēkō*), and a source of help and solace for the helpless and the wretched (*adhāra nirādhārakō*).

It is like a bridge to cross this ocean-like mundane world of transmigration with its formidable problems and miseries (*sētu bhava-sāgarakō*). [That is, to cross over this mortal world of birth and death, and find immortality instead, to break free from the shackles of this world and find liberation for the soul, the holy Name of Lord Ram is like a bridge that helps one to cross over from one side to another effortlessly.]

The holy Name is the source of eternal bliss and beatitude for the creature and his soul (*hētu suhasārakō*) (4).

There is no other Name or Entity which is more helpful and beneficial for the creature than Lord Ram's holy Name which makes even the most sinful and unholy person into one who is pure and holy (*patitapāvana rāma-nāma sō na dūsarō*), because the mere remembrance of which has turned the useless Tulsidas, who was as worthless as

a dry and barren moorland, into a fertile land sought after by all (sumiri subhūmi bhayō tulasī sō ūsarō).’

[To wit, even the worthless Tulsidas has become so venerated, honoured and sought after in the society when he has taken the shelter of Lord Ram’s holy Name. Earlier the same Tulsidas was subjected to scorn, rebuke and ridicule by the same society that now respects him. All this is obviously due to the marvelous effects of Lord Ram’s holy and divine Name that has so profoundly affected Tulsidas’ fate that from being derided and scorned at he has now become a great saint who is shown respect by one and all. Tulsidas says that he possesses no qualities worth the name, and so the only obvious reason for this honour is that he openly chants Lord Ram’s holy Name wherever he goes.] (5).

(70)

भलो भली भाँति है जो मेरे कहे लागिहै ।
 मन राम—नामसों सुभाय अनुरागिहै ॥1॥
 राम—नामको प्रभाउ जानि जूड़ी आगिहै ।
 सहित सहाय कलिकाल भीरु भागिहै ॥2॥
 राम—नामसों बिराग, जोग, जप जागिहै ।
 बाम बिधि भाल हू न करम दाग दागिहै ॥3॥
 राम—नाम मोदक सनेह सुधा पागिहै ।
 पाइ परितोष तू न द्वार द्वार बागिहै ॥4॥
 राम—नाम काम—तरु जोड़ जोड़ माँगिहै ।
 तुलसीदास स्वारथ परमारथ न खाँगिहै ॥5॥

(70)

bhalō bhalī bhām̐ti hai jō mērē kahē lāgihai.
 mana rāma-nāmasōm subhāya anurāgihai. 1.
 rāma-nāmakō prabhā'u jāni jūrī āgihai.
 sahita sahāya kalikāla bhīru bhāgihai. 2.
 rāma-nāmasōm birāga, jōga, japa jāgihai.
 bāma bidhi bhāla hū na karama dāga dāgihai. 3.
 rāma-nāma mōdaka sanēha sudhā pāgihai.
 pā'i paritōṣa tū na dvāra dvāra bāgihai. 4.
 rāma-nāma kāma-taru jō'i jō'i mām̐gihai.
 tulasīdāsa svāratha paramāratha na khām̐gihai. 5.

Verse no. 70—[Note :- After pleading with his disciple to chant Ram's holy Name repeatedly, warning for the consequences of not doing so, pleading again citing opposite circumstances which are benefited by Lord's Name, Tulsidas finally and lovingly requests his disciple to chant the Name, and obtain the benefits that he will reap from it.]

‘Oh my dear! If you pay heed to me and follow what I say, you would benefit and set to gain in all possible ways (bhalō bhalī bhām̐ti hai jō mērē kahē lāgi hai).

I'm telling this for your own good that you must forthwith develop full devotion and love for the holy Name of Lord Ram in your Mana (heart and mind) (mana rāma-nāmasōm̐ subhāya anurāgi hai) (1).

Forsooth, Lord Ram's holy Name is like a fire which removes the shiver of extreme cold of the chilly winter season (rāma-nāmakō prabhā'u jāni jūrī āgi hai).

Kaliyug—which can deflect one's wisdom from the path of good—runs away with all its companions out of fear on hearing this Name (sahita sahāya kalikāla bhīru bhāgi hai). [To wit, when a person takes the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name, the Kaliyug stops tormenting him and creating mischief for him. He is left alone in peace.] (2).

Vairagya (renunciation), Yoga (meditation), and Tapa (austerity and penance) etc. would become effective and powerful by merely chanting or repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram for it acts as a catalyst for their being effective and beneficial for a person (rāma-nāmasōm̐ birāga, jōga, japa jāgi hai).

Even a jealous and malignant Brahma (the creator who writes destiny) would not be able to blame you for your evil deeds (i.e. all the accumulated results of your past bad deeds will be eliminated forthwith as soon as you start repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram) (bāma bidhi bhāla hū na karama dāga dāgi hai).¹ (3).

[¹The holy Name of Lord Ram is so powerful that it not only neutralizes all the negative effects of misdeeds done by a creature but also gives him a credit balance in his spiritual account. So the Creator can't find any fault with this creature at the time of judgement, and is compelled to show him the path to heaven like a person who has done great religious merit in his life.

Refer: Verse no. 156, stanza no. 2 of this Book Vinai Patrika where an identical idea is expressed.]

If you eat a ‘Laddu’ (a ball-shaped sweet made of gram flour soaked in clarified butter and mixed with sugar) made of Lord Ram's holy Name which is soaked in the Amrit (a divine and sweet liquid that gives immortality; here meaning ‘honey’) of love and devotion (rāma-nāma mōdaka sanēha sudhā pāgi hai), you shall get the highest degree of satisfaction and contentment which would ensure that you don't have to go from door to door seeking anything ever (pā'i paritōṣa tū na dvāra dvāra bāgi hai).

[To wit, you will feel so contented and happy, so blissful and ecstatic, that nothing more would be left for you to want or expect in this life. ‘Door to door’ is a phrase meaning from one place to another or from one source to another seeking peace, happiness, bliss and rest for the soul.] (4).’

Addressing himself, Tulsidas says: ‘Ram's holy Name is like a Kalpa Tree that fulfils all wishes (rāma-nāma kāmā-taru). You will get whatever you ask of it, you will not be left wanting (jō'i jō'i mām̐gi hai). It will fulfil your wishes relating to your selfish interests in this world as well as your wishes for spiritual welfare and happiness (tulasīdāsa svāratha paramāratha na khām̐gi hai).’

[To wit, the holy Name of the Lord will fulfil all your wants, both the ones pertaining to this world as well as the ones pertaining to the requirements of your soul—i.e. its need for emancipation and salvation, for peace and tranquility, for bliss and happiness.] (5).

The most benevolent, merciful and greatest Lord Śrī Rāma

(71)

ऐसेहू साहबकी सेवा सों होत चोरु रे।
 आपनी न बूझ, न कहै को राँडडोरु रे ॥1॥
 मुनि—मन—अगम, सुगम माइ—बापु सों।
 कृपासिंधु, सहज सखा, सनेही आपु सों ॥2॥
 लोक—बेद—बिदित बड़ो न रघुनाथ सों।
 सब दिन सब देश, सबहिके साथ सों ॥3॥
 स्वामी सरबग्य सों चलै न चोरी चार की।
 प्रीति पहिचानि यह रीति दरबारकी ॥4॥
 काय न कलेस—लेस, लेत मान मनकी।
 सुमिरे सकुचि रुचि जोगवत जनकी ॥5॥
 रीझे बस होत, खीझे देत निज धाम रे।
 फलत सकल फल कामतरु नाम रे ॥6॥
 बेंचे खोटो दाम न मिलै, न राखे काम रे।
 सोऊ तुलसी निवाज्यो ऐसो राजाराम रे ॥7॥

(71)

aisēhū sāhabakī sēvā sōm hōta cōru rē.
 āpanī na būjha, na kahai kō rāmḍaḍōru rē. 1.
 muni-mana-agama, sugama mā'i-bāpu sōm.
 kṛpāsindhu, sahaja sakhā, sanēhī āpu sōm. 2.
 lōka-bēda-bidita barō na raghunātha sōm.
 saba dina saba dēsa, sabahikē sātha sōm. 3.
 svāmī sarabagyasōm calai na cōrī cārakī.
 prīti pahicāni yaha rīti darabārakī. 4.
 kāya na kalēsa-lēsa, lēta māna manakī.
 sumirē sakuci ruci jōgavata janakī. 5.
 rījhē basa hōta, khījhē dēta nija dhāma rē.
 phalata sakala phala kāmataru-nāma rē. 6.
 bēncē khōṭō dāma na milai, na rākhē kāma rē.
 sō'ū tulasī nivājyō aisō rājārāma rē. 7.

Verse no. 71—Alas, how stupid you are that you shy away from and try to avoid the service of such a (merciful, benevolent, kind, loving and dear) Master (as Lord Ram) (aisēhū sāhabakī sēvā sōm hōta cōru rē).

You have no understanding of your own (*āpanī na bījha*), nor do you pay any heed to what others say (or advise you) (*na kahai kō*). You are of no use; you are of no worth and are a hopeless case; you are dumb and useless like a lifeless stone or pebble found on the road (*rāmṛaḍōru rē*) (1).

Look, it's such a marvellous and wonderful thing that Lord Sri Ram, who is inaccessible even for the mind and intellect of sages (*muni-mana-agama*), becomes so easily available (to his devotees) like one has an easy access to one's parents (*sugama mā'i-bāpu sōm*).

He is an ocean of kindness, graciousness, generosity and benevolence (*krpāsindhu*), is a natural friend of all (*sahaja sakhā*), and he loves others as if they were all very dear to him, without having a cause or any sort of self-interest in doing so (*sanēhī āpu sōm*).

[To wit, like a parent loves the child in a natural way, and a true friend is one who loves without having any vested interest in the other person, Lord Ram's affection for all is natural, inherent, spontaneous and effusive. It is the Lord's habit to show affection towards his devotees and dependants.

Though even great sages find it difficult to access and communicate with the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram in spite of their undertaking of so many rigorous spiritual practices and observances, the same Lord is very easily accessible to his devotee by merely remembering him and invoking his holy name just like the case of a loving father who would immediately respond to a child when the latter calls out to him. The father may be out of reach for the rest of the world because, say, of his high stature as a senior government official or even as a king or his minister, but for his children he is always available. The rest of the world has to observe a lot of formalities to speak to the king or his minister or the high government official and take an appointment to even meet him, but his children can call him anytime of the day and interact with him in an informal manner. This is also the case with Lord Ram; his devotees can easily call him at their free will though great sages find it difficult even to concentrate their minds on the Lord.] (2)

The fact that there is no one greater and more exalted than Lord Sri Ram (*raghunātha*) is well known in the whole world, and well documented in the Vedas as well (*lōka-bēda-bidita barō na raghunātha sōm*).

He is available at all times of the day, in all the places, and stays with all everywhere (because the Lord is omnipresent and all-pervading) (*saba dina saba dēsa, sabahikē sātha sōm*) (3)

[Therefore, have devotion for Lord Sri Ram with sincerity and truthfulness in your heart, and don't try to act smart with him because—]The Lord is omniscient and all-knowing (*svāmī sarabagyasōm*), and hence a servant's (devotee's) pretensions, craft, sleight-of-hand, cunning, deceit and crookedness cannot remain concealed from him (*calai na cōrī cārakī*). [To wit, one can't deceive the Lord with pretensions of devotion and service.]

In the Lord's court, the only criterion or qualification that is recognised and given importance is 'true love and devotion'. It is the only code of conduct established in his court, and no amount of cunning, pretensions and deceptions will help anyone in any way whatsoever (*prīti pahicāni yaha rīti darabārakī*) (4).

It's such a wonderful thing that it requires no physical effort or suffering or labour to serve and please the Lord, for all one needs to do is to have true love and sincere devotion for the Lord to serve this objective. One needs only to have love and devotion for Lord Ram in his heart and serve the Lord in the simplest possible way without the hassle of physical exertion (*kāya na kalēsa-lēsa, lēta māna manakī*).

[Lord Ram does not want that his devotees should suffer in any way. The Lord is the eliminator of all sufferings, pains and troubles, so how can he be expected to make his devotees suffer just to serve him and to prove that the devotee loves his Lord? Therefore, it is not at all necessary to do severe penances or austerities or meditation etc. to please the Lord. Simple love and devotion in one's heart suffices.]

The Lord is so exceptionally gracious and affectionate that as soon as one remembers him, the Lord becomes eager to fulfil all the desires of his devotees. And even after fulfilling all the desires of the devotee without asking, the Lord still feels uneasy that he should have done more, that he should have given more, that he has not done enough for the devotee (*sumirē sakuci ruci jōgavata janakī*). How gracious and benevolent is he! (5)

When the Lord (Sri Ram) is pleased with someone, he becomes literally servile to him (i.e. the Lord literally comes under his control and obeys him; the Lord goes out of his way to reciprocate a person's affection for him by doing what pleases that person) (*rījhē basa hōta*). But on the other hand, if the Lord becomes annoyed with anyone, he liberates him from the shackles of this body (i.e. he kills him and liberates his soul) and sends him to his supreme abode (in the heaven) (*khījhē dēta nija dhāma rē*) (as he had done with the demons whom he did kill, but had sent all of them instantly to heaven).

Verily, the Lord's holy Name is akin to the 'Kalpa Tree' in which all types of fruits (rewards) are found (*phalata sakala phala kāmataru-nāma rē*). [The Kalpa Tree is the tree of gods which is able to fulfil all desires. Here it means that if one takes the holy Name of Lord Ram, then all his wishes are fulfilled.] (6).

The Lord has made this worthless Tulsidas extremely happy, joyful, contented and satisfied, the same Tulsidas who was earlier so useless (*sō'ū tulasī nivājyō*) that not a dime or penny could have been got by selling him as a slave (*bēncē khōṭō dāma na milai*), nor any purpose would have been served by keeping him as one's servant (*na rākhē kāma rē*).

Say, how can one describe the greatness and the glories of such a great Master and such a glorious Lord as Sri Ram, who is the King of Kings, because merely being associated with the Lord and taking the shelter of his holy Name such a worthless fellow as Tulsidas, who had always been sorrowful and miserable in his early life and was regarded as a worthless man by one and all, has become so happy and contented now (*aisō rājārāma rē*) (7).

Lord Śrī Rāma's Grace

(72)

मेरो भलो कियो राम आपनी भलाई ।

हौं तो साईं—द्रोही पै सेवक—हित साईं ।।1।।
 रामसों बड़ो है कौन, मोसों कौन छोटो ।
 राम सो खरो है कौन, मोसो कौन खोटो ।।2।।
 लोक कहै रामको गुलाम हौं कहावौं ।
 एतो बड़ो अपराध भौ न मन बावौं ।।3।।
 पाथ माथे चढ़े तृन तुलसी ज्यों नीचो ।
 बोरत न बारि ताहि जानि आपु सींचो ।।4।।

(72)

mērō bhalō kiyō rāma āpanī bhalā'ī.
 haur̥m tō sā'īm-drōhī pai sēvaka-hita sā'īm. 1.
 rāmasōm̄ barō hai kauna, mōsōm̄ kauna chōṭō.
 rāma sō kharō hai kauna, mōsō kauna khōṭō. 2.
 lōka kahai rāmakō gulāma haur̥m kahāvaur̥m.
 ētō barō aparādha bhau na mana bāvaur̥m. 3.
 pātha māthē car̥hē tṛna tulasī jyōm̄ nīcō.
 bōrata na bāri tāhi jāni āpu sīncō. 4.

Verse no. 72—Lord Sri Ram had done me so much good for me and provided me with welfare because of his inherent nature of being kind, merciful and compassionate, and doing good to others (for otherwise, what hope did I ever have of any good for myself if I had relied solely on my own deeds that were never good or meritorious enough to provide happiness and solace to me) (mērō bhalō kiyō rāma āpanī bhalā'ī).

I am wicked and crafty towards the Lord, but my Lord Sri Ram is so benevolent, compassionate, forgiving and graceful towards his servants (devotee, follower) by his inherent nature that he has forgiven me and forgotten all my follies, flaws, weaknesses and shortcomings while accepting me as his follower and dependant, and showering his blessings upon me notwithstanding my failings and unworthy nature (haur̥m tō sā'īm-drōhī pai sēvaka-hita sā'īm)

[To wit, if I was left alone to face my destiny according to the deeds I had done in this life or the baggage of the consequences of the deeds that I had done in my previous life, I would have been doomed. But the Lord is so kind and merciful that when he saw my miserable condition and the fact that I have come to surrender before him, begging him for mercy and forgiveness, the Lord immediately took cognizance of my plead, took pity on my condition, and provided solace and succour to me though I am unfit for receiving such grace.] (1).

Who is more exalted and greater than Lord Sri Ram (rāmasōm̄ barō hai kauna), and who is more lowly and downtrodden than me (mōsōm̄ kauna chōṭō)?

Who is more perfect, pure, immaculate and faultless than him (rāma sō kharō hai kauna), and who is more imperfect, flawed, evil and impure than me (mōsō kauna khōṭō)? (2).

The world says that I am a true ‘slave’¹ (i.e. an obedient servant or follower) of Lord Ram, and I too like to hear it and being called so (*lōka kahai rāmakō gulāma haum kahāvaurṁ*).

But this acceptance on my part is wrong (because I know that I am not at all qualified to be the Lord’s humblest of servants or devotees, but it gives me satisfaction and pleasure and honour to be deemed to be a servant of the Lord, so I accept it willingly) (*ētō barō aparādha bhau*).

Howbeit, inspite of this fact (that I am not qualified to serve the Lord, but still I like to be called the Lord’s servant because it serves my purpose), the Lord has overlooked this thing and has still accepted me as one of his own. The Lord has not become angry at me or turned his attention away from me for my wrong-doing and my audacity to openly accept being a servant of the Lord inspite of my unworthiness for this exalted stature, and then wrongfully enjoying the privileges that come with it. (*na mana bāvaum*)

[This shows how good and nice my Lord is, who has accepted even the most unworthy man like me and given his tacit support to me by remaining silent while I go about boasting about me being his servant and follower, and enjoying the honour and privileges that accompany it.

¹The word ‘slave’ (*gulāma*) here means one who serves his lord or master obediently and diligently, without expecting anything in return. Tulsidas says that even if it is accepted that he is the Lord’s servant who is serving the Lord as a literal ‘slave’, but he is deriving some benefit from this association by way of fame and good reputation, and it is therefore not a selfless and free service as it should have been. But the gracious Lord has overlooked this thing and has allowed Tulsidas to be honoured as being one of the Lord’s devotees. The Lord does not mind Tulsidas’ pretensions and false claims because the Lord is so gracious and broad-hearted.] (3)

Oh Tulsidas (*tulasī*)! My case (of Lord Ram accepting my misdemeanours and pretensions without punishing me) is like that of a humble piece of straw which rides on the surface of water inspite of the former being so tiny and of no consequence or significance (*pātha māthē carḥē tṛna jyōṁ nīcō*), because the water is so magnanimous that it thinks that since it has given shelter to the straw and has been nourishing and supporting it till now, and therefore the straw is dependent on it, it should let the humble straw be where it prefers to be instead of pulling it down and drowning it (*bōrata na bāri tāhi jāni āpu sīncō*).

[To wit, the water thinks that if it forcibly drowns the humble straw and compels it to perish, the reputation of the water itself as being life-giving and life-supporting element in this creation would suffer, and no great objective would be served and honour got by stifling such a humble thing as a straw.

In this allusion, Lord Sri Ram is like the water, and Tulsidas is like the straw. The straw is kept afloat by the mercy of the water because the latter thinks that since it has given shelter to the former once, it should not eject it out as that would be like throwing out one’s dependant, which is not a good thing to do. After all, the water knows that though the straw floats on its surface and might think in its utter ignorance that it is senior to the water because it rides on its surface, but the world knows that the straw has no worth and it is out of the water’s graciousness that it has allowed the straw to remain afloat instead of drowning it. Likewise, Tulsidas praises his Lord Sri Ram by saying that though he (Tulsidas) thinks that he is great but it is actually the

Lord who is great because the Lord has allowed the stupid fellow known as Tulsidas boast of his honour for which he is not at all worthy!] (4).

The clarion call to wake-up

Advice to the Creature

(73)

जागु, जागु जीव जड़! जोहै जग-जामिनी ।
 देह-गेह-नेह जानि जैसे घन-दामिनी ॥1॥
 सोवत सपनेहूँ सहै संसृति-संताप रे ।
 बूढ़यो मृग-बारि खायो जेवरीको साँप रे ॥2॥
 कहैं बेद-बुध, तू तो बूझि मनमाहिं रे ।
 दोष-दुख सपनेके जागे ही पै जाहिं रे ॥3॥
 तुलसी जागेते जाय ताप तिहूँ ताय रे ।
 राम-नाम सुचि रुचि सहज सुभाय रे ॥4॥

(73)

jāgu, jāgu jīva jaṛa! jōhai jaga-jāminī.
 dēha-gēha-nēha jāni jaisē ghana-dāminī. 1.
 sōvata sapanēhūṁ sahai sansṛti-santāpa rē.
 būrhyō mrga-bāri khāyō jēvarīkō sām̐pa rē. 2.
 kahaiṁ bēda-budha, tū tō būjhi manamāhiṁ rē.
 dōṣa-dukha sapanēkē jāgē hī pai jāhiṁ rē. 3.
 tulasī jāgētē jāya tāpa tihūṁ tāya rē.
 rāma-nāma suci ruci sahaja subhāya rē. 4.

Verse no. 73—Oh you foolish and dumb Creature (jīva jaṛa)! Wake-up, wake-up, and become aware (jāgu, jāgu)! Watch this world which is dark and foreboding like the pitch darkness of night (where one can't see anything and feels scared) (jōhai jaga-jāminī). [Here, Tulsidas exhorts a creature to realise the truth about this material world and the temptations of its sense objects, that it is not as charming as he thinks it to be, but rather it is as dark and frightening as the night where one sees ghosts and phantoms.]

Be wise enough to realise that all the different worldly relationships that you have developed and the affections that you have with them, whether they be your kith and kin or your own body, are all related or limited to your gross body (as they have nothing to do with your 'true self' which is your Atma or soul), and all of them are transient and momentary like the streak of lightening seen in the cloud—it shines and dazzles for a second and then vanishes from sight for good; it is here now and gone then (dēha-gēha-nēha jāni jaisē ghana-dāminī).

[The world is transient and mortal. The body of the creature itself is mortal and subject to decay and death. All worldly relationships are limited to this gross body, and they have no relationship with the soul which is actually the true identity of

a living being. Besides this, the world is selfish. As long as one serves the world with his body, the world loves him, and as soon as the body becomes old and feeble, people shun the person because he is of no use to them. So Tulsidas warns us to be careful.] (1).

Oh you foolish fellow (rē)! Not only while awake but even during your sleep you dream of the worries, miseries, troubles and ordeals of this world, and consequently suffer from them (and you never ever find rest even for a fleeting moment) (sōvata sapanēhūṁ sahai sansṛti-santāpa).

Alas! Due to countless delusions, you are virtually allowing yourself to be drowned in the water of a mirage (būṛhyō mṛga-bāri), and are feeling horrified at being bitten by an imaginary serpent when it is merely a harmless length of rope (khāyō jēvarīkō sāmṛpa rē).

[A man is so highly deluded and deeply engrossed in this mirage-like world that he thinks it to be true. So he worries about all the things of this world at all times of day and night. But he forgets that this world is so magical that it is like the mirage seen in a desert. This mirage traps an unwary thirsty traveller into thinking that there is water there, and as the traveller rushes towards it the illusion of water continues to move away from him till a time comes when the exhausted traveller falls down due to thirst and dies. Another instance is that of a ignorant man who gets terrified that he has been bitten by a snake if he happens to step on a rope in the darkness of the night. In fact, it often happens that he is so shocked that he dies of a heart attack in the belief that he has stepped on a snake and that it has bitten him without actually verifying what has happened.

This is what Tulsidas means here. One is so deluded that he thinks that the world is real and its relationships are real. So he remains worrying about them throughout his life without realising that all this is merely a mirage; that all sufferings and miseries pertaining to the world are self-inflicted and artificially created—because the ‘soul’, the ‘true identity of a creature’, has got nothing to do with it.] (2).

The Vedas and experts proclaim repeatedly (kahaiṁ bēda-budha), and you must understand this properly in your heart (tū tō būjhi manamāhiṁ rē), that all the agonies, sufferings, miseries, troubles and tribulations that are like a turbulence experienced during a dream are eliminated only when one wakes up from this nightmare (dōṣa-dukha sapanēkē jāgē hī pai jāhiṁ rē).

[To wit, the only way to get rid of worldly sufferings and miseries is to wake up and realise that the world is merely a mirage, that it is mortal and related to the gross body of the creature which itself is mortal. The true identity of all living beings is their ‘Atma’ or soul which is pure consciousness and distinct from the gross body. The Atma is subtle, sublime, eternal and blissful, and not mortal and suffering like the gross body. Once this is realised by a creature he comes to understand that the things that had been tormenting him till now are irrelevant because they are limited in their interactions to the gross body and not to the soul.] (3).

Oh Tulsidas (tulasī)! The ‘3 Traitaps’ (sufferings) of this world¹ are eliminated only on waking-up from the sleep of ignorance (jāgētē jāya tāpa tihūṁ tāya rē). And it is then only pure, selfless and natural love, affection and devotion for Lord Sri Ram’s holy Name sprouts or springs up in one’s heart like a spring of all happiness and joy (rāma-nāma suci ruci sahaja subhāya rē).

[Till the time the sun remains covered in a thick shroud of clouds one can't see its light. It is only when this cloud moves away that the sun shines in its dazzling brilliance. Likewise, as long as one remains engulfed in a veil of worldly delusions he cannot see the light of self-realisation that is symbolised by the glory of the soul and its natural affinity with the Lord and his divine name. As long as one thinks that the world is real, he yearns for its material pleasures and comforts; he has no time for spiritual matters and the Lord. It is only when he realises that what he thinks is comfortable and pleasureable are only transient and impermanent that he draws his mind to that which is permanent and stable, that which would give him true peace and happiness. In this quest a wise man ultimately realises that true happiness and peace lies in surrendering before the Lord God and taking refuge with him instead of remaining engrossed with the artificial world.] (4).

[Note—¹The 3 Traitaps are the following:--Adibhautik, Adhyatmik, Adidaivik. These respectively relate to the sufferings caused (i) by the physical world and its inhabitants, (ii) from spiritual causes, and (iii) maligned stars and unfavourable gods and forces of Nature.]

The clarion call to wake-up

Advice to the Creature

Rāga Vibhāsa

(74)

जानकीसकी कृपा जगावती सुजान जीव,
जागि त्यागि मूढताऽनुरागु श्रीहरे ।
करि विचार, तजि बिकार, भजु उदार रामचंद्र,
भद्रसिंधु, दीनबंधु, बेद बदत रे ॥1॥
मोहमय कुहू—निसा बिसाल काल बिपुल सोयो,
खोयो सो अनूप रूप सुपन जू परे ।
अब प्रभात प्रगट ग्यान—भानुके प्रकाष, बासना,
सराग मोह—द्वेष निबिड़ तम टरे ॥2॥
भागे मद—मान चोर भोर जानि जातुधान,
काम—कोह—लोभ—छोभ—निकर अपडरे ।
देखत रघुबर—प्रताप, बीते संताप—पाप,
ताप त्रिबिध प्रेम—आप दूर ही करे ॥3॥
श्रवन सुनि गिरा गँभीर, जागे अति धीर बीर,
बर बिराग—तोष सकल संत आदरे ।
तुलसिदास प्रभु कृपालु, निरखि जीव जन बिहालु,
भंज्यो भव—जाल परम मंगलाचरे ॥4॥

(74)

jānakīsakī kṛpā jagāvatī sujāna jīva,
 jāgi tyāgi mūrhatāhurāgu śrīharē.
 kari vicāra, taji bikāra, bhaju udāra rāmacandra,
 bhadrasindhu, dīnabandhu, bēda badata rē. 1.
 mōhamaya kuhū-nisā bisāla kāla bipula sōyō,
 khōyō sō anūpa rūpa supana jū parē.
 aba prabhāta pragaṭa gyāna-bhānukē prakāsa, bāsa-
 nā, sarāga mōha-dvēṣa nibira tama ṭarē. 2.
 bhāgē mada-māna cōra bhōra jāni jātudhāna,
 kāma-kōha-lōbha-chōbha-nikara apaḍarē.
 dēkhata raghubara-pratāpa, bītē santāpa-pāpa,
 tāpa tribidha prēma-āpa dūra hī karē. 3.
 śravana suni girā gambhīra, jāgē ati dhīra bīra,
 bara birāga-tōṣa sakala santa ādarē.
 tulasidāsa prabhu kṛpālu, nirakhi jīvajana bihālu,
 bhanjyō bhava-jāla parama maṅgalācarē. 4.

*Verse no. 74—(Tulsidas advises the creature—) “It is the grace of Lord Ram, the beloved husband of Janki (Sita) (jānakīsa), that makes a wise and clever creature wake up from the dream of delusions (jānakīsakī kṛpā jagāvatī sujāna jīva).

Therefore, if you wish to wake up and see the light of reality, abandon your stupidity and stubbornness while there is still time for you, and instead become a devotee of Lord Hari and develop affection for the Lord, for then the Lord would graciously grant you the wisdom to see the reality and overcome the blinding darkness of ignorance (jāgi tyāgi mūrhatāhurāgu śrīharē).

Think it over deeply (kari vicāra), abandon all your pretensions, evils and vices (taji bikāra), and have devotion for Lord Ramchandra who is most magnanimous and benevolent (bhaju udāra rāmacandra), who is an ocean of excellent characters and magnificent virtues (bhadrasindhu), and is a friend of the distressed, the lowly, the downtrodden and the humble (dīnabandhu). This is the unanimous view affirmed by the Vedas (scriptures) (bēda badata rē), and hence the inviolable truth.

[To wit, become wise and heed this advice: abandon all sorts of vices and faults that are associated with this gross world and caused by the sense organs of the body to gratify their instincts. Some of these negativities are having desires, being overcome by delusions, harbouring anger, envy etc. Instead of wasting time on these, you should worship Lord Sri Ram who is an ocean of grace, auspiciousness and welfare, who is the friend of the distressed and the neglected creatures, and who is hugely magnanimous and large-hearted.] (1).

A long time has elapsed while you have been asleep in the long and dark moon-less night of delusions, ignorance and confusions (mōhamaya kuhū-nisā bisāla kāla bipula sōyō), and have forgotten the true glorious nature of your ‘pure self’ amidst the dream of illusions, attachments and falsehoods that you have been dreaming during this night (khōyō sō anūpa rūpa supana jū parē).

Look, now it is day-light, and as soon as the rays of the sun-like wisdom and true knowledge dawns, the darkness of desires, passion, lust (Vasana), attachments

(Raag), delusions, ignorance, confusions (Moha) and envy, jealousy, conflicts of interest, ill-will, malice etc. (Dwesh) are eliminated (aba prabhāta pragaṭa gyāna-bhānukē prakāsa, bāsanā, sarāga mōha-dvēṣa nibiṛa tama ṭarē) (2).

Realising that it is day-light, the thieves and burglars in the shape of pride, vanity, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy have started fleeing (bhāgē mada-māna cōra bhōra jāni jātudhāna), while the throng of demons in the form of passions, anger, greed, avarice, anguish and agitations of all kinds have been frightened (kāma-kōha-lōbha-chōbha-nikara apaḍarē).

When the sins and various torments saw the glorious virtues of Lord Ram and the observed the Lord's presense that would grant unquestioned protection to his devotees, they also became a thing of the past (dēkhata raghubara-pratāpa, bitē santāpa-pāpa). [They stopped disturbing the Lord's devotee.]

Realise for yourself that the torments of the three worldly Traitaps¹ (horrors of life) have been doused automatically by the soothing water symbolised by Lord Sri Ram's affection, love, veneration and devotion (tāpa tribidha prēma-āpa dūra hī karē) (3)."

When wise and prudent saints hear such sincere and solemn advice, they realise that it is for their own good and welfare. So they wake up from the sleep of delusions and ignorance (śravana suni girā gambhīra, jāgē ati dhīra bīra), and willingly and cheerfully accept the virtues of renunciation, contentedness etc. (as the true path to self realisation, the path that would lead them to the Lord God, and ultimately towards emancipation and deliverance of their souls) (bara birāga-tōṣa sakala santa ādarē).

[Now, Tulsidas addresses himself and says—] 'Oh Tulsidas! The most gracious, kind and benevolent Lord Sri Ram (tulasidāsa prabhu kṛpālu), seeing that the devotees are tormented and agitated by the horrors created by delusions and ignorance of this world (nirakhi jīvajana bihālu), has broken or dismantled the entangling net of this world by providing them with the advice outlined herein above, because by following this advice, the creatures would derive lasting joy, happiness, contentedness and bliss, and freedom from all horrors associated with this mundane gross world of transmigration (bhanjyō bhava-jāla parama maṅgalācarē).'² (4).

[*This verse can be paraphrased in another way for ease of understanding. Wise and thoughtful saints wondered why the people of the world did not find true and abiding peace and happiness though they had all the material comforts and access to every pleasure of the physical world. They contemplated and deduced that it was because these people were trapped in the dark abyss of delusions caused by their ignorance of the reality and the truth, for they think that this gross visible and physical world of material objects that are needed to gratify the sense organs of the body will give them the happiness and peace they want. This erroneous thinking—that the world would give what is wanted by the creature for happiness and peace—pushes him and keeps the creature perpetually trapped in this pit of darkness. It jostles and remains restless for the rest of his life in pursuit of that illusive happiness and joy.

The wise saints pondered deeply into the matter and came to the conclusion true happiness, joy, peace and bliss comes not by pursuing the gross world and its charms, but in having devotion and love for Lord Ram, the Supreme Lord who is a fount of eternal spiritual grace, bliss and beatitude. This realisation arises in their

inner-self, and it is like an 'inner call' that they hear. This 'inner voice' advises them to get out of this abyss and see the light of day which comes with developing dispassion for the delusory world, and instead have devotion and affection for Lord Ram, to realise the fact that the Atma or the soul is the real 'self' of the creature, and not his gross body, and that true peace comes with self-realisation and renunciation of the world.

To remain in the darkness of the abyss of ignorance and delusion is like sleeping because the creature is unaware of the 'real' world around him. And waking up to the reality and becoming aware of the true way that leads to real and abiding peace, contentedness and happiness is like getting up from sleep into the world of sunlight. So whereas ignorance is darkness, knowledge is sunlight; sunlight eliminates darkness even as knowledge removes ignorance.

Hence, when the wise saint hears this inner voice of consciousness speaking to him, he wakes up from his sleep of ignorance and delusions, and sees the light of knowledge that leads him to reality and abiding happiness.]

[Note—¹The 3 Traitaps or horrors of the world and life are: (i) Adhibhautik = related to mortal world and its creatures who may be the cause of torments to the person concerned; (ii) Adhidaihi = torments arising from one's own body, such as illness and old age; and (iii) Adhidaivik = miseries created by opposed gods and stars.

²To wit, when wise people hear the voice of their consciousness, the inner voice that gives them the advice as outlined in this verse, they realise its truth and see its merit. So therefore, they abandon all things that are evil, things that pull their souls into the depth of darkness symbolised by the various delusions associated with this gross mundane world, things that would never give them any sort of abiding peace or happiness. They realise that there is no gain in pursuing this world; rather it is a trap that would keep them perpetually ensnared in endless wants, great misery, never ending restlessness, grief and pain. So they turn their attention to that path that would give them eternal peace and bliss, that path that would make them contented and happy in the real sense. And this path is easy: it involves having love and affection for Lord Ram who is a personified form of the Supreme Lord of creation.]

Surrender to Lord Rāma & Complete Faith in the Lord

Rāga Lalita

(75)

खोटो खरो रावरो हौं, रावरी सौं, रावरेसों झूठ क्यों कहौंगो,
जानौ सब ही के मनकी ।
करम-बचन-हिये, कहौं न कपट किये, ऐसी हठ जैसी गाँठि
पानी परे सनकी ॥१॥
दूसरो, भरोसो नाहिं, बासना उपासनाकी, बासव, बिरंचि
सुर-नर-मुनिगनकी ।
स्वारथके साथी मेरे, हाथी खान लेवा देई, काहू तो न पीर
रघुबीर! दीन जनकी ॥२॥
साँप-सभा साबर लबार भये, देव दिव्य, दुसह साँसति कीजै
आगे ही या तनकी ।
साँचे परौं, पाऊँ पान, पंचमें पन प्रमान, तुलसी चातक आस

(75)

khōṭō kharō rāvarō hauṁ, rāvarī sauṁ, rāvarēsōṁ jhūṭha kyōṁ kahauṅgō,
 jānau saba hī kē manakī.
 karama-bacana-hiyē, kahauṁ na kapaṭa kiyē, aisī haṭha jaisī gāmṭhi
 pānī parē sanakī. 1.
 dūsarō bharōsō nāhiṁ, bāsanā upāsanākī, bāsava, biranī
 sura-nara-muniganakī.
 svārathakē sāthī mērē, hāthī khāna lēvā dē'i, kāhū tō na pīra
 raghubīra! dīna janakī. 2.
 sāmṭpa-sabhā sābara labāra bhayē, dēva dibya, dusaha sāmṣati kijai
 āgē hī yā tanakī.
 sāmṣcē parauṁ, pā'ūṁ pāna, pañcamēṁ pana pramāna, tulasī cātaka āsa
 rāma syāmaghanakī. 3.

Verse no. 75—[Tulsidas prays to his revered Lord Ram as follows—]

Oh Lord (rāvara)! Whether sort of person I am, whether good or bad, pious or corrupt, I am yours, oh Lord (khōṭō kharō rāvarō hauṁ). By your honour, why should I lie to you (rāvarī sauṁ, rāvarēsōṁ jhūṭha kyōṁ kahauṅgō)? Since you know even the inner thoughts and feelings of everyone (jānau saba hī kē manakī), so how can I ever dare to speak lie to you, how can I cheat or defraud you?

I tell you—truthfully, honestly, without a trace of deceit, conceit, crookedness or any sort of pretensions in my mind and heart—that ‘I am yours’ (kahauṁ na kapaṭa kiyē). This declaration of mine is earnest and sincere, and I am saying it with my heart, and it is evident in all my actions and deeds (karama-bacana-hiyē).

[To wit, every moment of my life is dedicated to you, oh Lord Ram, and you can judge the truthfulness of my words in whatever I say, whatever I do and whatever I think. I can't play fools with you by speaking sweetly to appease you, for you are all-knowing and omniscient, being aware of my inner feelings and thoughts.]

This vow of mine that I am your servant (a devout follower; a devotee; one who finds pleasure in serving one's Lord) is as strong as a knot tied in a rope made of jute that has been soaked in water (aisī haṭha jaisī gāmṭhi pānī parē sanakī).

[A knot in a jute rope becomes so rigid and stiff and tight when dipped in water and dried that it is impossible to untie it later on.] (1).

Oh Raghubir (“raghubīra”—i.e. Lord Sri Ram)! I don't rely on anyone else and don't expect anything from anyone (dūsarō bharōsō nāhiṁ), nor do I have any desire to worship or admire (bāsanā upāsanākī) even Indra (the king of Gods—“bāsava”), Brahma (the Creator—“biranī”) or any other God, not to mention human beings and exalted hermits who may have acquired great fame (sura-nara-muniganakī).

Excepting you, all the rest are selfish companions and friends (svārathakē sāthī mērē)—after serving them like an elephant for a life-time, all they give are insignificant rewards like one were a dog (to whom the master throws discarded

crumbs of bread as if it was sufficient reward for all the service the dog has rendered unto him) (hāthī khāna lēvā dēī).

None of them have empathy or sympathy towards the sorrows and sufferings of those who are wretched, meak, weak, miserable and distressed like the way you (Lord Ram) have (kāhū tō na pīra dīna janakī).

[To wit, no matter how sincerely and diligently a person serves others for a life-time, no one would acknowledge the magnitude or selflessness of his service. His lord or master thinks that his servant is being paid for the services rendered, and that is all there is to it. What more should a servant get except his promised salary and perks? Here, the elephant is used as a figure of speech to indicate that a person bears the burden of his master's services and duties just like the elephant carries his master on his back. And just like this elephant who is pierced by the goad if it does not obey its master's command, the servant is endlessly taken to task for even the slightest slip he may make in doing his assigned duties. The master rarely tolerates negligence in performance of duty by his servant. And rarely would the master pat the servant on his back for his diligence and sincerity, rarely would he give him credit for sacrificing all that he has done in the service of his master, for the latter expects this from his servant as a matter of fact.

And after all the sacrifices and toil the servant makes for the welfare and comfort of his master, what does he get? Only a pittance; nay, if he commits any error in service then all his goodness and services are forgotten, and he is admonished and chided as if he is not even a human being deserving some basic respect.

That is to say, it is well nigh impossible to please any of the gods, or any human master, no matter how hard one tries. Even the hermits would get offended quickly if their wishes are not fulfilled or they are not shown due respect. Tulsidas says that Lord Ram is the only Lord who feels obliged by the smallest service his devotee does to him, and the Lord goes out of his way to reward the devotee far more than what he deserves by the measurement of his service.] (2).

Oh glorious, divine and holy Lord (dēva dibya)! If I tell a lie and pretend that 'I am your devout servant', then inflict intolerable pain on my body (i.e. punish me most severely) (dusaha sāmśati kījai āgē hī yā tanakī) like a false snake charmer who suffers in the midst of serpents (sāṁpa-sabhā sābara labāra bhayē).

[A person who pretends that he knows the trick to control snakes by use of Mantras or mystical chants, but actually has no idea of them, is sure to get bitten to death by the serpents. Likewise, if I am saying any lie to you regarding my devotion and surrender to you, then oh Lord punish me in the severest way I deserve.]

Howbeit, on the contrary, if I prove myself to be true in what I say about my being a devoted servant of Lord Sri Ram, then oh Lord, I should be duly honoured for my truthfulness and sincerity in the assembly of saints (sāmčē paraurṁ, pā'ūrṁ pāna, pañcamēm pana pramāna).

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, this Tulsidas asserts that he is like the bird known as 'Chatak' that expects succour and mercy from no other source but the rain-bearing cloud, because Tulsidas too exclusively relies on Lord Ram for succour and solace as well as for fulfilment of all his needs like this bird (tulasī cātaka āsa rāma syāmaghanakī).

[Just like the rain-bearing cloud quenches the thirst of the bird known as Chatak, the sparrow hawk that is believed to drink rain-drops directly falling from the cloud during the constellation or "Nakshatra" known as Swati, and from no other

source to quench its thirst, Tulsidas says that he expects nothing from anyone else except his beloved Lord Sri Ram. Even if there are thousands of people and many more gods willing to help him, he will reject them all and accept anything that Lord Ram gives him.

This verse is an ideal example of the sincerity, the intensity, the depth and the dimension of Tulsidas' love, affection and devotion as well as faith and confidence in his Lord, Sri Ram. Tulsidas is absolutely convinced that if there is anyone in this world whom he can call as his very own and dearest, the only Lord who will take care of his worldly as well as spiritual well-being, than it is Lord Ram and no one else.] (3).

"Rām-Bōlā"

(This was Tulasīdās' childhood name; how he was accepted by Śrī Rāma)

(76)

रामको गुलाम, नाम रामबोला राख्यौ राम,
काम यहै, नाम द्वै हौं कबहूँ कहत हौं ।
रोटी-लूगा नीके राखै, आगेहूँकी बेद भाखै,
भलो हैहै तेरो, ताते आनंद लहत हौं ॥1॥
बाँध्यौ हौं करम जड़ गरब गूढ़ निगड़,
सुनत दुसह हौं तौ साँसति सहत हौं ।
आरत-अनाथ-नाथ, कौसलपाल, कृपाल,
लीन्हों छीन दीन देख्यो दुरित दहत हौं ॥2॥
बूझ्यौ ज्योंही, कह्यो, मैं हूँ चेरो हैहौ रावरो जू
मेरो कोऊ कहूँ नाहिं, चरन गहत हौं ।
मींजो गुरु पीठ, अपनाइ गहि बाँह, बोलि
सेवक-सुखद, सदा बिरद बहत हौं ॥3॥
लोग कहैं पोच, सो न सोच न सँकोच मेरे
ब्याह न बरेखी, जाति-पाँति न चहत हौं ।
तुलसी अकाज-काज राम ही के रीझे-खीझे,
प्रीतिकी प्रतीति मन मुदित रहत हौं ॥4॥

(76)

rāmakō gulāma, nāma rāmabōlā rākhyau rāma,
kāma yahai, nāma dvai haum kabahūm kahata haum.
rōṭī-lūgā nīkē rākhai, āgēhūkī bēda bhākhai,
bhalō hvaihai tērō, tātē ānamda lahata haum. 1.
bām̐dhyau haum karama jaṛa garaba gūṛha nigara,
sunata dusaha haum tau sām̐sati sahata haum.
ārata-anātha-nātha, kausalapāla, kṛpāla,
līnhōm china dīna dēkhyō durita dahata haum. 2.

būjhyau ज्याunhī, kahyō, mair̥m hūm̥ cērō hvai hau rāvarō jū
 mērō kō'ū kahūm̥ nāhim̥, carana gahata hauṁ.
 mīnjō guru pīṭha, apanā'i gahi bām̥ha, bōli
 sēvaka-sukhada, sadā birada bahata hauṁ. 3.
 lōga kahair̥m pōca, sō na sōca na sam̥kōca mērē
 byāha na barēkhī, jāti-pām̥ti na cahata hauṁ.
 tulasī akāja-kāja rāma hī kē rījhē-khījhē,
 prītikī pratīti mana mudita rahata hauṁ. 4.

Verse no. 76—[It is believed that Tulsidas had uttered the word 'Rāma' during the very early moments of his birth. A normal child cries, but this blessed soul had said the holy Name of Lord Ram the first thing after stepping into this world! So, people started calling him by this name, i.e. as "Rām-Bōlā", which literally means 'one who had said Ram'.

In due course of time, as the child grew up, he lost his parents, and was living hand to mouth, with no one caring about him. He used to go from house to house begging for food, and at every door he used to say the name of the Lord to invite its residents to offer him something as food just as a means of charity because he had invoked the holy Name. Destiny had destined a more noble fate for Tulsidas, as is evident in his later life when he became a renowned saint famed for his unswerving devotion and deep love for Lord Ram. It is later on in life Tulsidas realised the significance of the holy Name of the Lord.

In this verse, this noble saint-poet is expressing his heart-felt thanks to the Lord by invoking whose name he had been able to tide over the most adverse of circumstances of life and emerge a winner, someone who became revered and respected in society. Tulsidas credits Lord Ram for his sustenance and all that he had achieved in life by relying on the strength of the Lord's holy Name, for it was on the strength of the Lord's name that he had fed his stomach in his early days, and even today he is remembered because he had the Lord's holy Name in his tongue, glorifying its virtues and highlighting its immense spiritual potentials. Forsooth, in the realm of devotional writings and devotion for Lord Ram, no one has matched Tulsidas. So he gives thanks to his revered Lord Ram, and says that he would never be able to sufficiently thank him for the immensity of grace and benevolence that the Lord has shown towards him.

In the context of this verse, refer also to verse no. 75 herein above, and verse nos. 79 and 106 herein below.]

'I am literally a slave of Lord Ram (rāmakō gulāma). [Tulsidas means that he is absolutely loyal to his Lord, and is his devout and selfless follower who wants nothing in return for the services he offers to his loved Lord, Sri Ram. Just like a slave who obeys his master without asking questions and is bound to serve the master for his entire lifetime, Tulsidas also vows to be faithful and obedient to his Lord Sri Ram and serve him throughout his life.]

People call me 'Rambola' (nāma rāmabōlā). It is the name Lord Ram had decided for me (rākhau rāma). But what do I do for getting this honour? Nothing actually, except that I only utter Sri Ram's holy Name once or twice occasionally (kāma yahai, nāma dvai hauṁ kabahūm̥ kahata hauṁ), and it is due to which Sri Ram provides me with enough Roti (bread) and clothes (rōṭī-lūgā nīkē rākhai).

[To wit, the Lord is so gracious and kind that since I utter his name "Ram"

occasionally, the sole reason for which people call me “Rambola”—one who says ‘Ram’, he ensures that my basic needs of food and clothes are met. For otherwise, nothing good and worthwhile is written in my destiny; I would have starved to death and gone naked had it not been due to the mystical powers and potentials inherent in Lord Ram’s holy Name, for by merely saying it, not out of any particular devotion but merely out of habit, I get what I need! Is it not fantastic? Is it not something to wonder?]

So much for this mundane existence in this mortal world, and as for the other world (i.e. the life after death), the Vedas are repeatedly asserting me (āgēhūkī bēda bhākhai) that—“Your spiritual welfare is assured, and certainly ensured, by the wonderful mystical powers inherent in Lord Ram’s holy Name, powers that provide liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation to the soul, powers that take care of the welfare and well-being of the creature who utters this holy Name, willingly or unwillingly (bhalō hvaihai tērō).”

In all sooth therefore, and for this reason, I am always happy and contented. Verily I affirm that I have no worries in this world about my present as well as my future (for now it is in safe hands of Lord Ram because I say his holy Name) (tātē ānamda lahata hauṁ). (1).

At first (in the beginning), the senseless, evil deeds that I had been doing had shackled me to pride, haughtiness, vanity and ego (bām̐dhyau hauṁ karama jaṛa garaba gūrha nigara). It was such a horrible state of affairs that it is almost intolerable (or very uncomfortable) to even think (or hear) about it now (sunata dusaha hauṁ tau sām̐sati sahata hauṁ).

Being thus tormented and dismayed, I had called out in distress, ‘Oh Lord of the distressed and destitutes (ārata-anātha-nātha)! Oh Lord of Kaushal (Ayodhya; kausalapāla)! Oh an ocean of mercy, compassion, graciousness and benevolence (krpāla)! I am under great agony and stress, and am suffering a lot due to my misfortunes (durita dahata hauṁ). [So oh my merciful Lord, have mercy upon me; I am your humblest of servant.]’

(As soon as the Lord heard my pitiful cries of distress and prayer for mercy, he intervened.) Lord Sri Ram, having seen me burning from (the fire of) sins, liberated me immediately from the knot that had tied me to my deeds (līnhōm chīna dīna dēkhyō). [To wit, as soon as I begged my Lord Ram to help me out of my sufferings, he manoeuvred things in such a way that I turned away from evil deeds and longing for this world, and instead devoted my life to the Lord.] (2).

As soon as he asked me, ‘Who are you and what’s the matter’ (būjhyau jyaunhī), I replied immediately, ‘Oh Lord! I wish to become your devout servant (an ardent, loyal, faithful and truthful follower, a devotee) of your lordship (kahyō, mair̐m hūm̐ cērō hvaihai rāvarō jū). I have nobody I can call as mine anywhere in this world (mērō kō’ū kahūm̐ nāhir̐), and I have come to hold your feet (to take shelter and refuge) (carana gahata hauṁ).’

At this, Lord Ram, who is the supreme Guru (preceptor, teacher) of the world, thumped my back (mīnjō guru pīṭha), accepted me (as his follower, servant, devotee, dependant, ward) by holding my arms, and reassured me, saying (apanā’i gahi bām̐ha, bōli) that I need not worry as the Lord is determined to provide comfort, happiness and joy to his devotees, and that this is his glorious reputation of which he is ever conscious (sēvaka-sukhada).

[To wit, Lord Ram told Tulsidas that he has a reputation for providing succour and solace to anyone who comes to seek his refuge and shelter, irrespective of what such seeker had been doing in the past. For, once he has come before the Lord, no matter how dark his past was, this darkness can't survive in the light of the Lord's auspicious presence just as night can't survive in the presence of the sun. So, Tulsidas need not worry any more about his welfare and well-being. A similar idea is expressed by Lord Ram with respect to Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana, when he had come to seek shelter and refuge at the holy feet of Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Doha no. 43 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it, and Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that follow it; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 48.]

Verily, ever since that time, I have been always narrating and spreading the immense glories and great virtues of the Lord to the best of my ability (*sadā birada bahata haum̐*) (as a thanks giving to the Lord who had salvaged my life from being drowned in the quagmire of my ill fate to which I was earlier condemned by the fiat of Destiny)¹. (3)

[¹There is another way of interpreting this particular stanza. Tulsidas has said that earlier in life he had been involved in doing evil deeds. In other words, he was leading an ordinary life like others who are concerned only in feeding their stomach, acquiring whatever then can of the material things of the world, by hook or by crook, and enjoying the world as best they can without bothering about their future. In this endeavour, they fight with each other, develop envy and jealousy, make and break relationships, and become indulgent and selfish to the extreme. Tulsidas was very poor, and would not get any respect in the society. Ordinarily he would have lived and died anonymously like others, suffering the whole life in wants and miseries.

But luckily he turned to Lord Ram. And what was the driving force for this change? It was the power of Lord Ram's holy Name which Tulsidas had used to gather food for his stomach, without realising the hidden benefit he was getting by saying this powerful Mantra. Even as a medicine takes its effect once imbibed, this holy Name of Lord Ram turned Tulsidas' heart away from the world and towards Lord Ram, albeit in a very silent and gradual way. Being overcome with insurmountable problems in this world, Tulsidas felt helpless and hapless, so as a last resort he turned to Lord Ram and cried for succour.

This was the opportunity the merciful Lord was waiting for, for as soon as Tulsidas told the Lord that he has come to seek refuge at his feet, the Lord welcomed him by holding his arms, and assuring him that now onwards he need not worry.

So, since that time Tulsidas accepted Lord Ram as his "Guru", and become his "disciple". A disciple of some great Guru wears certain signs or symbols that marks him or her as a follower of that Guru. Since Lord Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, his followers are called 'Vaishnav'. These Vaishnavs sport certain external signs—such as holding a small prayer rosary in hand or tied around their neck, a Tilak mark on the forehead, silent repetition of the Lord's holy Name, and so on. They also take the vow of leading an auspicious life according to the principles of Dharma (code of conduct for a noble and ethical way of life), and follow the path of non-violence, non-distinction, equality, equanimity, politeness etc.

Obviously, all these auspicious and noble observances make the erst-while sinful man into a noble and holy man. And naturally such a man gets respect and honour in the society. This is what Tulsidas alludes to in these stanzas.

He says that on the strength of Lord Ram's name he has been transformed from a sinful man into an honoured man. And therefore he says that he felt obliged to

go around in the world lauding and spreading the holiness and glories of Lord Ram and his holy Name.]

Seeing me become a devout servant (devotee; follower; ‘slave’) of Lord Ram (as described in stanza 1), people call me lowly, dumb and good-for-nothing; they call me stupid and out of my wits (*lōga kahair̥m pōca*)². But I am not at all bothered about these comments nor reluctant to become a servant of Lord Ram (*sō na sōca na samkōca mēre*).

Verily indeed, I pay no heed to my detractors and their insinuations against me because I do not need to please and appease them as I don’t have to establish marital relations with anyone (*byāha na barēkhī*), nor am I concerned with caste and creed of anyone if he denounces me for being a servant of Lord Ram (*jāti-pām̐ti na cahata haur̥m*).

[²People call Tulsidas ‘lowly’ because he was born into a Brahmin family, and Brahmins are too proud of their higher caste birth so much so that they look down upon any Brahmin who serves anyone as his servant. This misplaced arrogance on the part of the Brahmins has over time alienated them from the society, and they live in a self-created shell of a false sense of superiority, hypocrisy and chauvinism. People forgot that Tulsidas is not serving some human Lord, but is merely following the advice of the scriptures which have repeatedly advised the creature to surrender himself before the Lord God.

They call him out of his mind and look down upon him is because they had expected him to teach, preach and earn money like other educated people like him, rise in terms of acquisition of wealth and prosperity, which are the yardsticks the world uses to measure success in life, and not waste it by being a savant and friar who goes about singing verses in prayer of the Lord Ram. That is, the world did not expect Tulsidas to renounce the world, live like a friar, and devote his life to Lord Ram, singing the Lord’s glories and remaining submerged in the Lord’s thoughts, relying on the Lord for everything he needs, and not attempting to please and appease the world for his necessities of life, for this is what the world wanted from him, to feel obliged to the world and its people for even his basic needs.

But Tulsidas didn’t do it; he did not beg before the world after he surrendered himself before Lord Ram. So the people felt he has gone nuts; that he is haughty and too proud to ask anyone for anything. To this Tulsidas says he is unconcerned—for he need not please the world as he does not have to establish any relationships of mutual benefit with it, that he does not expect anything from the world. Even if the people call him an out-caste, they are welcome, for as far as Tulsidas is concerned, what matters is his relationship with his revered Lord Ram, and the fact that he serves his Lord to the best of his ability like a loyal servant. The rest of the things would be surely taken care of by the Lord himself, and Tulsidas is not to be bothered about it.]

Tulsidas asserts that his destiny, whether it entails his welfare or ruin, is in the hands of Lord Sri Ram alone; it is the Lord’s grace or annoyance alone that would either grant him an auspicious destiny or ruin it respectively (*tulasī akāja-kāja rāma hī kē rījhē-khījhē*). He says: ‘I (Tulsidas) am sure, assured and have firm faith on your (Sri Ram’s) love and affection towards me (that you can never think ill or harm of Tulsidas), and that is why I am always happy and live in eternal peace (*prītikī pratīti mana mudita rahata haur̥m*)’³. (4).

[³Tulsidas answers the people who call him foolish and look down upon him for submitting unconditionally before Lord Ram. He says that whether the Lord is

benevolent or malevolent towards him, the latter will always remain loyal towards his Lord, and will not seek succour, relief and shelter anywhere else except at the holy feet of Sri Ram and his holy Name. This declaration by Tulsidas shows his intense faith and devotion for Lord Ram, for he is absolutely certain that Lord Ram will take care of him. Tulsidas says he will not be distracted from his chosen path by the jealous words of his worldly detractors who wish to draw him away from Lord Ram and become one like them.

It ought to be noted in the context of this verse that Tulsidas had spent a major part of his life in Kashi or Varanasi, a pilgrim city where the ruling deity is Lord Shiva. Every resident of Kashi is expected to worship Lord Shiva. In this backdrop, Tulsidas worshipped and advocated the cause of Lord Ram. This seems to have rubbed narrow minded people and religious bigots on the wrong side. They found it hard to digest that Tulsidas would break tradition and sing the glories of Lord Ram instead of using his talents in praising Lord Shiva. We read in the life of Tulsidas that the Pundits of Kashi had been greatly troubling him out of jealousy for his fame and talent. Perhaps this verse is directed at such tormentors.]

Glory of Śrī Rāma

(77)

जानकी-जीवन, जग-जीवन, जगत-हित,
जगदीस, रघुनाथ, राजीवलोचन राम ।
सरद-बिधु-बदन, सुखसील, श्रीसदन,
सहज सुंदर तनु, सोभा अगनित काम ।।1।।
जग-सुपिता, सुमातु, सुगुरु, सुहित, सुमीत,
सबको दाहिनो, दीनबन्धु, काहूको न बाम ।
आरतिहरन, सरनद, अतुलित दानि,
प्रनतपालु, कृपालु, पतित-पावन नाम ।।2।।
सकल बिस्व-बंदित, सकल सुर-सेवित,
आगम-निगम कहैं रावरेई गुनग्राम ।
इहै जानि तुलसी तिहारो जन भयो,
न्यारो कै गनिबो जहाँ गने गरीब गुलाम ।।3।।

(77)

jānakī-jīvana, jaga-jīvana, jagata-hita,
jagadīsa, raghunātha, rājīvalōcana rāma.
sarada-bidhu-badana, sukhasīla, śrīsadana,
sahaja sundara tanu, sōbhā aganita kāma. 1.
jaga-supitā, sumātu, suguru, suhita, sumīta,
sabakō dāhinō, dīnabandhu, kāhūkō na bāma.
āratiharana, saranada, atulita dāni,
pranatapālu, kṛpālu, patita-pāvana nāma. 2.
sakala bisva-bandita, sakala sura-sēvita,
āgama-nigama kahairi rāvarēī gunagrāma.

ihai jāni tulasī tihārō jana bhayō,
n'yārō kai ganibō jahām' ganē garība gulāma. 3.

Verse no. 77—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma) who is dear to Sita like her own life (because you are her beloved husband—“jānakī-jīvana”). You are the supreme Soul of this world and the one who injects life into it (jaga-jīvana). You are the benefactor of the world, the Lord who takes care of the welfare and well-being of the world (jagata-hita).

You are the Lord of the world (jagadīsa). You are the Lord of king Ragu's race (raghunātha). You have lotus-like eyes (rājīvalōcana).

Your countenance is (beautiful and charming) like that of the full moon of 'Sharad' (the first full moon of winter) (sarada-bidhu-badana).

You provide happiness and joy, and possess noble characters (sukhasīla).

You are an abode of 'Sri' (i.e. you have all the noble virtues and characters that give fame and good name to a person besides giving him prosperity, wealth, riches, comforts etc.) (śrīsadana). [The word “Sri” stands for all the good virtues that a man can have in this world. These give him good name and bring in their wake establishment, successes, fame and honour. Lord Ram has all these.]

Your body is naturally handsome and attractive (sahaja sundara tanu), and its beauty is comparable to innumerable Kamdeos (sōbhā aganita kāma). [Kamdeo is the patron god of beauty and charm.] (1).

You are like a father, a mother, and a Guru for the world (jaga-supitā, sumātu, suguru) because you provide it with happiness and joy like they do (to their offspring and disciple respectively) (suhita).

You are a dear friend of the world (sumīta), a universal friend who always think of good and welfare of all, and one who is invariably favourably inclined towards all (sarakō dāhinō). [To wit, you are always thinking of the good of the world; you are always favourable towards the world.]

Though it is true that you are a friend of the meek, the weak and the humble (dīnabandhu) but this does not mean that you would harm anybody else and neglect their welfare even though they aren't weak, meek are humble, or are able and powerful enough to take care of themselves (kāhūkō na bāma).

[To wit, even though you favour the lowly and the meek, but it does not mean that you neglect the not-so-lowly and the not-so-meek, or would let them suffer or cause them to suffer in order to favour the humble, weak and the meek. For in all sooth, you act in a very judicious manner, with equanimity, impartiality, and love for all—because you are like the parent and the guru for the whole world. Even as a parent would love all children alike; even the able child gets the same love and care as the weak child, you too take equal care of the whole world, though of course you are ever ready to help those who need your help. You treat the lowly and the exalted, the poor and the rich, the fallen and the risen equally, without distinction based on caste, creed, religion and beliefs.]

You remove the countless troubles and tribulations, sufferings, agonies, miseries and ordeals of those who suffer from them (āratiharana); you give refuge to refuge seekers (saranada); you are a peerless and a most gracious and liberal donor whose charitable disposition has no parallel (atulita dāni); you are a protector of those who have surrendered themselves before you and have become your refugee

(pranatapālu); and you are very merciful, compassionate, kind and gracious (krpālu).

Your divine and holy Name “RAM” purifies the downtrodden, the miserable, the sinful, the wretched and the lowly (patita-pāvana nāma). (2).

The whole universe pays obeisance to you (sakala bisva-bandita); all the Gods serve you (sakala sura-sēvita), and all the Vedas and Purans (scriptures) sing only your majesty’s glories (āgama-nigama kahairṁ rāvarēṁ gunagrāma). [That is, all the scriptures glorify you when they sing the glories of the Supreme Being because you are no one else but the Supreme Being himself in a personified form.]

Understanding and realising the truth of all this, Tulsidas has become your servant (a devout follower) (ihai jāni tulasī tihārō jana bhayō). Now tell me oh Lord, whether you will treat him separately or include him in the list of those whom you treat favourably as they are your humble and devoted servants (n'yārō kai ganibō jahāmṁ ganē garība gulāma)?

[That is, will you be kind to accept me as one of your devotees, and show your grace upon me as you would show to one of your ardent devotees?] (3).

[Note: Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, specially his devotees, in this verse.]

Śrī Rāma is an unparalleled, selfless Benefactor for the Creature

Rāga Ṭōṛī

(78)

देव—
 दीनको दयालु दानि दूसरो न कोऊ ।
 जाहि दीनता कहौ हौ देखौ दीन सोऊ ॥1॥
 सुर, नर, मुनि, असुर, नाग साहिब तौ घनेरे ।
 (पै) तौ लौ जौ लौ रावरे न नेकु नयन फेरे ॥2॥
 त्रिभुवन, तिहूँ काल बिदित, बेद बदति चारी ।
 आदि—अंत—मध्य राम! साहबी तिहारी ॥3॥
 तोहि माँगि माँगनो न माँगनो कहायो ।
 सुनि सुभाव—सील—सुजसु जाचन जन आयो ॥4॥
 पाहन—पसु, बिटप—बिहंग अपने करि लीन्हे ।
 महाराज दसरथके! रंक राय कीन्हे ॥5॥
 तू गरीबको निवाज, हौ गरीब तेरो ।
 बारक कहिये कृपालु! तुलसिदास मेरो ॥6॥

(78)

dēva-
 dīnakō dayālu dāni dūsarō na kō'ū.
 jāhi dīnatā kahaur̥m haur̥m dēkhaur̥m dīna sō'ū. 1.
 sura, nara, muni, asura, nāga sāhiba tau ghanērē.
 (pai) tau laur̥m jau laur̥m rāvarē na nēku nayana phērē. 2.
 tribhuvana, tihūṁ kāla bidita, bēda badati cārī.
 ādi-anta-madhya rāma! sāhabī tihārī. 3.
 tōhi māmṅgi māmṅanō na māmṅanō kahāyō.
 suni subhāva-sīla-sujasu jācana jana āyō. 4.
 pāhana-pasu, biṭapa-bihamṅa apanē kari līnhē.
 mahārāja dasarathakē! raṅka rāya kīnhē. 5.
 tū garībakō nivāja, haur̥m garība tērō.
 bāraka kahiyē kṛpālu! tulasidāsa mērō. 6.

Verse no. 78—Oh Lord (“dēva”—Sri Ram)! There is no one other than you who grants endless mercy and compassion to the distressed and the miserable, one who gives abundant peace and happiness to all such creatures (dīnakō dayālu dāni dūsarō na kō'ū).

To whosoever I describe my problems and miseries, I find that the person himself is in distress and miseries (so how can he help me when he himself is suffering) (jāhi dīnatā kahaur̥m haur̥m dēkhaur̥m dīna sō'ū). [What can he, who is in distress and troubles himself, give to others? How can a person who is suffering himself and needs succour can ever provide help and succour to others?]¹ (1).

[¹Tulsidas observes that the whole world is feeling miserable, none of the creatures is truly happy and contented though they may keep an external countenance of happiness, but this is merely to hide their internal sense of unease and unhappiness. In this scenario, what can he expect from the world? Whenever Tulsidas approaches someone in the hope he would find some person who is happy and contented so that he can learn the tricks from him, he draws a blank. So what's the use of begging from those who are beggars themselves?]

There are many lords and masters in this world (sāhiba tau ghanērē), such as the different gods, humans, sages, hermits, demons, serpents etc. who lord over the heaven, the earth and the subterranean worlds (sura, nara, muni, asura, nāga)—but (pai) they are favourable and benevolent upon a person only till the moment you (Lord God personified in the form of Lord Sri Ram) are not hostile or malevolent towards that person (tau laur̥m jau laur̥m rāvarē na nēku nayana phērē). [But as soon as these worldly lords realise that you have turned hostile (or angry, unfavourable or opposed to someone), all of them abandon and forsake him immediately, for they know that they can't pretend to be that person's benefactor any longer once the Great Lord, Sri Ram, is opposed to him, for now their deceit of being his well-wisher would be exposed.]² (2).

[²Tulsidas means that the real Lord who ensures a person's happiness and well-being is Lord Ram, and all other lords of the world go out of their way to try and show favour to this fortunate and blessed person and act kindly to him just to gain favour with Lord Ram because he would like that these worldly lords are treating his favoured disciple politely and kindly. It is like the case of a person who is in good books of the ruling sovereign of a kingdom. All the courtiers try to befriend him, but it is to serve their own interest for they fear that this favoured person of the sovereign

may otherwise say a bad word for them in the ears of their king, which would mean they themselves would have to suffer.

Therefore, all the favours and kindness shown by these lords and courtiers are hinged on the favourable disposition of the emperor of the realm; once the emperor becomes hostile to this once favoured person, all these courtiers too would turn against him.

This is what is meant here. All the able powers of the world, such as the gods, humans, hermits etc., are favourably inclined towards a person only till the moment the supreme Lord of the world is favourable towards this person. But once this person loses his patron Lord, in this case Lord Ram, he immediately loses all favours with the selfish world; everyone turns hostile against him.

That is why Tulsidas has said in the previous verse no. 76, stanza nos. 3-4 that once Lord Ram has accepted him as his servant or follower by holding his arms personally, Tulsidas is not bothered by what the world says about him.]

It is well known and established in all the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial, subterranean), the three eras (past, present, future), and even the four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva Vedas) also assert (tribhuvana, tihūṁ kāla bidita, bēda badati cārī), that you, oh Lord Ram, are the Supreme Authority of the world (rāma sāhabī tihārī); you have been so from the beginning, are so at the present, and will remain so till the end of the world (and beyond it) (ādi-anta-madhya)³. (3).

[³It must be remembered that Lord Ram is a human manifestation of the Supreme Being, and the latter is indeed the supreme Authority in this creation.]

[Addressing Lord Ram, Tulsidas says—] Any beggar who begged before you was never called (i.e. remained) a beggar again (for he achieved or attained eternal happiness and became contented and desire-less forever) (tōhi māmgi māmganō na māmganō kahāyō).

Hearing this renowned fame and glory of yours, hearing about your excellent virtues and noble character, this humble servant (Tulsidas) has come to beg before you (suni subhāva-sīla-sujasu jācana jana āyō)⁴ (4).

[⁴Refer stanza no. 3 of verse no. 77 herein above.]

*You had even accepted a lifeless stone (a reference to Ahilya; “pāhana”)^a, animals (monkeys, bears; “pasu”)^b, trees (Yamalarjun; “biṭapa”)^c and birds (vulture Jatāu, crow Kaghbhusund; “bihamga”)^d by showing your grace upon them.

Oh king Dasrath's son (a reference to Lord Ram; “mahārāja dasarathakē”)! You had transformed the wretched and the impoverished paupers into Kings of their realms (rañka rāya kīnhē) (a reference to Sugriv and Vibhishan)^e. (5).

You give solace, succour, support and happiness to the poor, lowly and meek (tū garībakō nivāja), and I am your one such poor and humble one who has come to you (haum garība tērō). [Tulsidas means: “I am too one of those humble beings who you have always provided support and succour to, because I am one of your followers, servant and devotee who is selfless and wants nothing except your mercy and grace. So oh Lord, I am sure to receive your grace and mercy.”]

Oh merciful Lord (krpālu)! Please utter at least once that “this fellow Tulsidas is mine” (and that would be sufficient for me) (bāraka kahiye tulasidāsa mērō) (6).

[Note—*In this verse, Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees.

Now, let us briefly read about the entities mentioned in this stanza.

^aAhilya: Refer verse no. 43, stanza no. 3 and its accompanying note.

^bAnimals—Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman, Jamvant etc. were all born as monkeys and bears, but Lord Ram did not treat them as such but befriended them, showing them the same respect as he would have shown his own brothers Bharat or Laxman, embracing them and expressing his gratitude to them for helping him in his attempt to eliminate the demons led by Ravana. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 3 (with respect to Hanuman); Doha no. 4 (where Lord Ram made Sugriv his friend); (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 8 (where Lord Ram introduces all his monkey, bear and demon companions to sage Vasistha upon return to Ayodhya).

^cThe story of the Tree: Once the two sons of Kuber named Nal-Kuber and Manigriv derided and made fun of sage Narad, at which he cursed them to become trees. When they regretted their follies, the sage blessed him that they would get liberation when touched by the feet of Lord Krishna. As a result the two brothers became two Arjun trees in Gokul (Vrindavan). Once, when Yashoda had tied Sri Krishna to a pestle as a child, he dragged it to the place where the two trees stood adjacent to each other. The pestle got stuck between them, and Krishna gave such a forceful jerk that both the trees fell down, thereby liberating the two brothers from their curse.

^dJatau and Kaagbhusund were birds, the former a vulture and the latter a crow. Both were shown great love and affection by Lord Ram.

The story of Jatau is stated in brief as a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3.

The story of Kaagbusund briefly is as follows: He was a great devotee of Lord Ram in the form of a crow. His life is presented in the epic Ramcharit Manas written by the great poet-sage Goswami Tulsidas, in its 7th Kanda (Chapter), from Doha no. 105 to 125.

Earlier in his previous lives he was a human being. He used to stay in Ayodhya, the capital city of Lord Ram and was a great devotee of the Lord. But time became unfavourable for him and due to misfortunes that befell him he went to Ujjain, a famous pilgrim site. There he used to worship Lord Shiva and was given the Lord's Mantra by some Brahmin. Bhusund used to repeat this Mantra of Lord Shiva in a temple. Once, the Guru summoned him and advised that the reward of worshipping Lord Shiva is to have steady and unflinching devotion for Lord Ram, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This did not go down well with Bhusund who thought that the Guru is misleading him and causing an insult to Shiva. So, once when his Guru arrived in the temple where Bhusund was meditating upon Shiva with the relevant Mantra, he did not show due respect to the Guru. This audacity and irreverence annoyed Lord Shiva and he cursed him to go to the worst type of hell and be born as a reptile (a serpent). The merciful Guru intervened on behalf of Bhusund and pleaded with Shiva to forgive him. At his intercession, Shiva blessed Bhusund that though he would have to be born as low forms of life to suffer for his misdeed, he would always be wise and enlightened amongst all such life forms; Gyan would always stand him in good stead, and as a result he would be elevated to a higher birth each time he was born again to progress rapidly in the evolutionary hierarchy to finally become a human once again. As a human he would become a Brahmin, the highest stature in this form.

As a result of this incident Bhusund became a serpent, and subsequently had to take birth in many low life forms. Finally he became a Brahmin. He was so much inherently devoted to Lord Ram that even as a child he used to enact incidents from the Lord's life on earth. The learned father's repeated attempts to teach him in the

traditional method of education that was in vogue for learned Brahmins failed to enthuse the child Bhusund, and when the parents died he went to the forest as a mendicant. He roamed in the numerous hermitages of sages and seers, seeking knowledge of devotion for the Lord because he was charged with a strong longing to find his Lord Ram. By and by, he came to the hermitage of sage Lomas who used to live on the top of Mt. Meru. The sage, like so many previous sages, attempted to teach metaphysics and philosophy to the young Bhusund, but again the latter had scant attention for such things. While sage Lomas persistently espoused the cause of formless Divinity or the Nirguna Brahm, Bhusund persisted with his quest for the formed or Saguna Divinity in the person of Lord Ram, the form which was very dear and close to his heart. His persistence peeved the sage and he cursed him to be born as a crow, the scavenging bird. Bhusund took this not as a curse but as a blessing of his Lord Ram. The sage too repented at his anger and was very moved by the innocence of Bhusund. He relented and reassured Bhusund that though he would have to become a crow as result of the curse but he would be the wisest bird in creation. The sage gave him the Mantra of Lord Ram. He kept Bhusund in his hermitage for some time and taught him the story of Ram, called the Ramayan. The sage divulged the secret that this divine story was revealed to him by Lord Shiva himself. He also blessed Bhusund that he would live as long as he wished, and death would not affect him; he would die only when he wished. The hermitage where Bhusund would establish himself would be glorified and no ignorance would ever come within one Yojan (roughly equal to 8 or 16 miles according to different measures) of it. Immediately there was a voice from the heaven which endorsed the sage's blessing and confirmed that Bhusund was indeed a great devotee of the Lord.

Then Bhusund went to Mt. Neel in the northern Himalayan ranges and established his hermitage there. It is here that once Garud, the legendary vehicle of Lord Vishnu, had gone for enlightenment on the advice of none other but Lord Shiva himself when he was overcome with delusions about the true nature of Lord Ram. At that time, Bhusund had already spent seven hundred and twenty Kalpas¹ worshipping and meditating upon Lord Ram. Whenever Lord Ram took birth as a human in each Treta Yug of the celestial cycle of four Yugs, Bhusund would go and visit the Lord to play with the child Ram.

^eSugriv and Vibhishan were both condemned and thrown out from their respective kingdoms by their elder brothers, Baali of the kingdom of Kishkindha where the monkey and bear race lived, and Ravana of the kingdom of Lanka where the demons lived. Both had no hope ever of returning home, what to say of getting the crown of their respective kingdoms. But when they came and took refuge with Lord Ram, their destiny changed for good, and they were eventually made the kings of their kingdoms, and their tormentors, their brothers, were eliminated.

Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Doha no. 5—to Doha no. 11 which tells the story of how Sugriv became the king of Kishkindha; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Doha no. 41—to Doha no. 49; and Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 106 which describes how Vibhishan became the king of Lanka.]

Tulasīdās' humility & Rāma's greatness

(79)

देव—

तू दयालु, दीन हौं, तू दानि, हौं भिखारी।
 हौं प्रसिद्ध पातकी, तू पाप-पुंज-हारी॥1॥
 नाथ तू अनाथको, अनाथ कौन मोसो?
 मो समान आरत नहिं आरतिहर तोसो॥2॥
 ब्रह्म तू हौं जीव, तू है ठाकुर, हौं चेरो।
 तात-मात, गुरु-सखा तू सब बिधि हितु मेरो॥3॥
 तोहिं मोहिं नाते अनेक, मानियै जौ भावै।
 ज्यों त्यों तुलसी कृपालु! चरन-सरन पावै॥4॥

(79)

dēva-

tū dayālu, dīna hauṁ, tū dāni, hauṁ bhikhārī.
 hauṁ prasid'dha pātakī, tū pāpa-punja-hārī. 1.
 nātha tū anāthakō, anātha kauna mōsō?
 mō samāna ārata nahim āratihara tōsō. 2.
 brahma tū, hauṁ jīva, tū hai ṭhākura, hauṁ cērō.
 tāta-māta, guru-sakhā tū saba bidhi hitu mērō. 3.
 tōhim mōhim nātē anēka, māniyai jau bhāvai.
 jyōm tyauṁ tulasī kṛpālu! carana-sarana pāvai. 4.

Verse no. 79—Oh Lord (dēva)! If you are the one who is renowned for showing kindness, mercy and grace upon those who are humble, wretched, miserable and distressed (tū dayālu), then surely I fit the bill as I am one such person (dīna hauṁ).

If you are a matchless and generous donor (tū dāni), then I am a beggar of the humblest kind (hauṁ bhikhārī).

If I am a famous sinner (hauṁ prasid'dha pātakī), then you are the vanquisher and destroyer of all the treasures of sins (tū pāpa-punja-hārī). [Therefore, oh Lord, I qualify for your attention and grace; do I not?] (1).

If you are the Lord of the destitutes (nātha tū anāthakō), then who is a greater destitute than me (anātha kauna mōsō)?

There is no one as sorrowful, miserable and pitiful as me (mō samāna ārata nahim), and neither is there one greater than you who can eliminate sorrows and distress (āratihara tōsō). (2).

You are Brahm (the supreme Soul known as the Parmatma, the immortal Lord of this creation) while I am an ordinary Jiva (a mortal living being) (brahma tū, hauṁ jīva).

You are the Lord, while I am a humble servant of yours (tū hai ṭhākura, hauṁ cērō).

What more, for me you are a mother, father, teacher, friend and benefactor by all means (tāta-māta, guru-sakhā tū saba bidhi hitu mērō)¹. (3).

[¹Refer: (a) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 77, stanza no. 2; (b) Ram Charit Manas, (i) Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 130; (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 47.]

Forsooth, it is therefore evident that we two (Lord Ram and Tulsidas) are related to each other in many ways (tōhim mōhim nātē anēka). Whichever relation suits you, you treat me as such (māniyai jau bhāvai).

But the thing is, oh merciful, this Tulsidas yearns to get refuge and shelter in your holy feet (jyōm tyaum tulasī kṛpālu! carana-sarana pāvai). [And I cite your reputation and invoke your gracious nature to plead with you not to turn me away.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, specially his devotees, in this verse.]

Śrī Rāma is an exceptionally gracious & magnanimous Lord

(80)

देव—
 और काहि माँगिये, को माँगिबो निवारै।
 अभिमतदातार कौन, दुख-दरिद्र दारै॥1॥
 धरमधाम राम काम-कोटि-रूप रुरो।
 साहब सब बिधि सुजान, दान-खडग-सूरो॥2॥
 सुसमय दिन द्वै निसान सबके द्वार बाजै।
 कुसमय दसरथके! दानि तैं गरीब निवाजै॥3॥
 सेवा बिनु गुनबिहीन दीनता सुनाये।
 जे जे तैं निहाल किये फूले फिरत पाये॥4॥
 तुलसिदास जाचक-रुचि जानि दान दीजै।
 रामचंद्र चंद्र तू चकोर मोहिं कीजै॥5॥

(80)

dēva-
 aura kāhi māmṅiyē, kō māmṅibō nivārai.
 abhimatadātāra kauna, dukha-daridra dārai. 1.
 dharamadhāma rāma kāma-kōṭi-rūpa rūrō.
 sāhaba saba bidhi sujāna, dāna-khaḍaga-sūrō. 2.
 susamaya dina dvai nisāna sabakē dvāra bājai.
 kusamaya dasarathakē! dāni taim garība nivājai. 3.
 sēvā binu gunabihīna dīnatā sunāyē.
 jē jē taim nihāla kiyē phulē phirata pāyē. 4.
 tulasidāsa jācaka-ruci jāni dāna dījai.

rāmacandra candra tū, cakōra mōhim kījai. 5.

Verse no. 80—Oh Lord (“dēva”—i.e. Sri Ram)! In front of whom should I stretch my hands now to ask for anything (aura kāhi māmgiyē)? Who else can remove my wants forever; who else would give me so much that I won’t need to seek anything any longer (kō māmgiḃō nivārai)? Who else is there who is able to liberally grant all that one wants (abhimatadātāra kauna) so much so that all my sorrows, miseries, poverty and wants are eliminated for good (dukha-daridra dārai)? (1).

Oh Sri Ram (rāma)! You are the abode (i.e. a personified form) of Dharma (“dharamadhāma”—i.e. you embody all the grand virtues of auspiciousness, nobility of thought and conduct, probity and propriety that are collectively called the principles of Dharma).

You are more beauteous and charming than millions of Kamdeos (the patron god of beauty and charm) taken together (kāma-kōṭi-rūpa rūrō).

You are my Lord and Master by all means (sāhaba saba bidhi). You are a thorough gentleman and know whatever is in my mind and heart (“saba bidhi sujāna”—because you are omniscient and live in all the creatures as their Atma or soul; and therefore I can’t hide anything from you, and neither can I cheat you with false words).

You are exceptionally generous and extremely magnanimous in the virtue of giving charity and bestowing blessings on others, and in this quality you are unique and peerless like a warrior who is renowned for his special skills at wielding the sword (dāna-khaḍaga-sūrō).

[To wit, every warrior knows how to use the sword, but amongst them there is one who has acquired great fame for his skills with the sword, for he can wield it in a way no one else can. This warrior stands out in the crowd. Likewise, there are so many big and small donors and granters of boons, blessings and largesse in this world, but in all sooth and without any gainsay I say that there is no one like you.] (2).

During good times, drums are played (i.e. celebrations are held) at the gate and door-step of all for a day or two (i.e. for a few days only) (susamaya dina dvai nisāna sabakē dvāra bājai), but oh son of Dasrath (“dasarathakē”—Lord Sri Ram), you are such a gracious donor and benefactor that even during bad times you ensure that care is taken of the poor, the miserable, the pitiable and the distressed who fall upon bad times (kusamaya dāni taiṃ garība nivājai)¹ (3).

[¹This stanza can be paraphrased as follows: During good times everyone seems to enjoy happiness, and all the people gather to congratulate such a person who is fortunate. But when days become bad and fortune turns its back on a person, there is gloom all around, and no one comes to help the same person whom they had shown so much friendship during the time the days were good for him. In this time of gloom and distress, the only true friend is Lord Ram. The Lord ensures that his devotee is taken good care of. Albeit the person has to suffer what ever is written in his destiny and also the consequences of his own deeds, but his suffering is mitigated to a large extent and reduced in intensity and duration by the grace of Lord Ram.]

Even those persons who hadn't served you at all (sēvā binu) and were completely devoid of good qualities, characters and virtues of any kind (gunabihīna), were fully satisfied and rewarded by you when they asked for your mercy and pleaded before you for your grace (dīnatā sunāyē -- nihāla kiyē).

I have witnessed such people roaming about contented, and exulting in joy and happiness after they had surrendered themselves before you and were graced by you (jē jē tairm nihāla kiyē phulē phirata pāyē) (4).

Now,realising what this beggar Tulsidas wants (for he does not want anything else except your love, affection and devotion) (tulasidāsa jācaka-ruci jāni), please also give him alms (dāna dījai) in the form of a boon that he develops a relation with you that makes him like the bird Chakor (Indian red-legged partridge) and you, Lord Ram, like the full Moon (rāmacandra candra tū, cakōra mōhiṁ kījai)². (5).

[²The Chakor constantly gazes at the moon and is enamoured by its beauty. So, Tulsidas hopes that his constant gaze is also transfixed on the divine form of Sri Ram, and he prays to the Lord to bless him with the boon that he may think of nothing else but the divine form of Lord Ram, that he may have unwavering devotion and affection for the Lord, and that for him all that matters in his life is Lord Ram and nothing else.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, specially his devotees, in this verse.]

The Torments of the World

(81)

दीनबंधु, सुखसिंधू, कृपाकर, कारुणीक रघुराई।
 सुनहु नाथ! मन जरत त्रिबिध जुर, करत फिरत बौराई।।1।।
 कबहुँ जोगरत, भोग—निरत सठ हठ बियोग—बस होई।
 कबहुँ मोहबस द्रोह करत बहु, कबहुँ दया अति सोई।।2।।
 कबहुँ दीन, मतिहीन, रंकतर, कबहुँ भूप अभिमानी।
 कबहुँ मूढ, पंडित बिडंबरत, कबहुँ धर्मरत ग्यानी।।3।।
 कबहुँ देव! जग धनमय रिपुमय, कबहुँ नारिमय मासै।
 संसृति—संनिपात दारुन दुख बिनु हरि—कृपा न नासै।।4।।
 संजम, जप, तप, नेम, धरम, ब्रत, बहु भेषज—समुदाई।
 तुलसिदास भव—रोग रामपद—प्रेम—हीन नहिं जाई।।5।।

(81)

dīnabandhu, sukhasindhū, kṛpākara, kārunīka raghurāī.
 sunahu nātha! mana jarata tribidha jura, karata phirata baurāī. 1.

kabahuṃ jōgarata, bhōga-nirata saṭha haṭha biyōga-basa hō'ī.
 kabahuṃ mōhabasa drōha karata bahu, kabahuṃ dayā ati sō'ī. 2.
 kabahuṃ dīna, matihīna, raṅkatara, kabahuṃ bhūpa abhimānī.
 kabahuṃ mūḍha, paṇḍita biḍambarata, kabahuṃ dharmarata gyānī. 3.
 kabahuṃ dēva! jaga dhanamaya ripumaya, kabahuṃ nārimaya māśai.
 sansṛti-sannipāta dārūna dukha binu hari-krpā na nāsai. 4.
 sanjama, japa, tapa, nēma, dharama, brata, bahu bhēśaja-samudā'ī.
 tulasidāsa bhava-rōga rāmapada-prēma-hīna nahim jā'ī. 5.

Verse no. 81—[Verse nos. 81 and 82 are closely related, and should be read together to fully comprehend their import and spiritual message.]

Oh the most merciful and compassionate Lord of the race of king Raghu (i.e. Lord Ram) (kārunika raghurā'ī)! You are a friend of the distressed, the miserable and the poor (dīnabandhu); you are an ocean of happiness, joy and bliss (sukhasindhū); and you always show grace, kindness and compassion (krpākara).

Listen Lord (sunahu nātha)! My mind is suffering from the three worldly torments known as 'Traitap' (Adhyatmik, Adhibhautik, Adidaivik)¹, or else it may be suffering from a fever arising out of the worldly faults (represented by 'Kaam'-desire, lust; 'Krodh'-anger, indignation, malice wrath; and 'Lobha'-greed, avarice, wants, covetousness) (mana jarata tribidha jura).

It is because of the heat generated by these spiritual ills that my mind roams about in this world in a delirious state, hallucinating and talking incoherent rubbish like a mad man (karata phirata baurā'ī). (1).

[¹The Traitaps have been described in note appended to verse no. 17, stanza no. 2.

Tulsidas means that a Jiva, the living being, invariable suffers from the various torments caused by this mortal gross world so much so that his soul can't find peace and rest at all just like a person suffering from high fever. He tries all sorts of remedies as a means to overcome his sufferings and consults different advisors who tell him so many diverse ways to find spiritual rest and peace. These methods are briefly enumerated in the stanzas that follow below. But unfortunately, none of these methods serve the purpose, and the creature continues to suffer. Tulsidas then prescribes a remedy at the end in stanza nos. 4-5 when he says that the only way to find freedom from all spiritual problems and worldly sufferings that agitate the soul, and instead have abiding happiness and joy, is when one develops devotion and affection for Lord God, surrendering himself before the Lord, seeking his mercy and grace.]

Sometimes he practices Yoga (meditation; "kabahuṃ jōgarata"), and at other times this wretched rascal gets entangled in sensual and materialistic pleasures of the world, thinking that this would give him happiness (bhōga-nirata saṭha). But the irony is that it gets forcibly sucked in a vortex of sufferings that come with not getting what one wants, or losing what one already has (haṭha biyōga-basa hō'ī).

Sometimes he is overwhelmed by the sorrows of separation from certain people or things he loves (haṭha biyōga-basa hō'ī). Due to his delusions and ignorance, he sometimes creates various sorts of unnecessary discords and enmities

with the same people from whose separation he had suffered grief (*kabahum̐ mōhabasa drōha karata bahu*), and at other times the same fellow shows great compassion, mercy and benevolence towards them for whom he had harboured ill-will and animosity a while ago (*kabahum̐ dayā ati sō'ī*).

His behaviour thus becomes very erratic. (2).

Sometimes he pretends to be meek, humble, ignorant, impoverished and downtrodden (*kabahum̐ dīna, matihīna, raṅkatara*), while at other times he becomes like an arrogant and haughty king (*kabahum̐ bhūpa abhimānī*).

It is such an irony that sometimes he behaves like a fool, and at other times like an expert (*kabahum̐ mūḍha, paṇḍita*). Sometimes he indulges in hypocrisy, falsehood and deceit (*biḍambarata*), and at other times he behaves like he were an ardent follower of Dharma or one who follows right conduct and thought (*kabahum̐ dharmarata gyānī*). [To wit, he obviously proves himself to be fickle minded and unsure of himself.] (3).

Sometimes oh Lord (*kabahum̐ dēva*), the whole world appears full of lucre, prosperity and wealth to him (*kabahum̐ jaga dhanamaya*), sometimes full of enemies (*ripumaya*), and at other times charming, lustful and passionate as if it were a personified form of a young woman (*kabahum̐ nārimaya māśai*). [To wit, a deluded man falls prey to the attractions of lucre, anger, passion or lust.]

This horrible condition that causes endless misery and trouble for the creature in this gross mortal world of sense objects is like a fever that makes a person suffer and hallucinate immensely (*sansṛti-sannipāta dārūna dukha*), and this suffering can never be eliminated and the accompanying agitation never be calmed down without the Lord's mercy, grace and kindness (*binu hari-kṛpā na nāśai*) (4).

Though there are various remedies (for this spiritual malaise) as prescribed in the scriptures as well as traditional wisdom (*bahu bhēṣaja-samudā'ī*), such as practicing self control (*saṅjama*), chanting and repetition of holy Mantras, known as doing of Japa (*japa*), doing penances and observing austerities (*tapa*), doing religious rituals, observing strict vows, fasting etc. (*nēma, brata*), as well as following the principles of Dhrama (the path of righteousness, probity, propriety, scrupulous, ethics and nobility of thought and conduct; “*dharama*”)—but for Tulsidas the disease in the form of this delusory world cannot be eliminated without love and devotion for the holy feet of Sri Ram (*tulasidāśa bhava-rōga rāmapada-prēma-hīna nahim̐ jā'ī*)². (5).

[²Refer: verse no. 82, stanza no. 4 which speaks of the same thing.

The meaning of this stanza in the context of this verse is self-evident. Tulsidas affirms that though there are various methods available for a person to overcome the many spiritual problems he is facing in this world, but as far as he is concerned the only sure-shot remedy is having devotion for Lord Ram and surrendering at the holy feet of the Lord.]

(82)

मोहजनित मल लाग बिबिध बिधि कोटिहु जतन न जाई ।
 जनम जनम अभ्यास—निरत चित, अधिक अधिक लपटाई ॥1॥
 नयन मलिन परनारि निरखि, मन मलिन बिषय सँग लागे ।
 हृदय मलिन बासना—मान—मद, जीव सहज सुख त्यागे ॥2॥
 परनिंदा सुनि श्रवन मलिन भे, बचन दोष पर गाये ।
 सब प्रकार मलभार लाग निज नाथ—चरन बिसराये ॥3॥
 तुलसिदास ब्रत—दान, ग्यान—तप, सुद्धिहेतु श्रुति गावै ।
 राम—चरन—अनुराग—नीर बिनु मल अति नास न पावै ॥4॥

(82)

mōhajanita mala lāga bibidha bidhi kōṭihu jatana na jā'ī.
 janama janama abhyāsa-nirata cita, adhika adhika lapaṭā'ī. 1.
 nayana malina paranāri nirakhi, mana malina biṣaya samṅga lāgē.
 hr̥daya malina bāsanā-māna-mada, jīva sahaja sukha tyāgē. 2.
 paranindā suni śravana malina bhē, bacana dōṣa para gāyē.
 saba prakāra malabhāra lāga nija nātha-carana bisarāyē. 3.
 tulasidāsa brata-dāna, gyāna-tapa, sud'dhihētu śruti gāvai.
 rāma-carana-anurāga-nīra binu mala ati nāsa na pāvai. 4.

Verse no. 82—[This verse is closely related to verse no. 81.]

The different types of spiritual and moral dirt (scum; taint; infirmities; shortcomings; blemishes; flaws; defects; weaknesses) clinging to me in the form of sins, vices, evils and other negativities of character and temperament which have their origin in delusions, infatuations, bewilderments, ignorance, allurements, attachments etc. having their origin in this world (mōhajanita mala lāga bibidha bidhi) are not removed even by any means, even after countless efforts and trials (kōṭihu jatana na jā'ī) done over many lives and generations (janama janama abhyāsa)¹.

This mind is habituated (nirata cita) to be engrossed in sins and evil deeds, whereat this scum (dirt, slush, filth in the form of different sins, vices, evils) goes on progressively increasing (escalating) and having a firmer grip on me (adhika adhika lapaṭā'ī) (1).

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 29 that precedes Doha no. 121—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 122.]

The eyes have been blinded and its vision blurred by looking at other people's women (nayana malina paranāri nirakhi); the mind has become corrupted due to the company with and contact of sensual objects (of this materialistic world; “mana malina biṣaya samṅga lāgē”); the heart has been darkened by lust, covetousness, greed, avarice, infatuations, haughtiness, ego and hypocrisy (hr̥daya malina bāsanā-māna-mada).

The consequence of this horrifying turmoil and degradation of the soul is that the Jiva (the living being; the creature) has forsaken or has abandoned or has forgotten

about its natural state of blissfulness and happiness that are the characteristics of its truthful ‘self’ known as the Atma (“*jīva sahaja sukha tyāgē*”), whereupon the Jiva remains restless, miserable and aggrieved by misery and torments² (2).

[²The true identity of all living beings known as the Jiva is his soul or his Atma. This Atma is nothing but pure consciousness, and is characterized by peace, bliss and contentedness. But unfortunately this Atma has to live inside the gross body of the Jiva, and this gross body becomes tainted over time if the Jiva is not careful about himself.

It is like a noble person who allows his house to become filthy and unkempt out of laziness and carelessness. But once his dwelling becomes dirty, this person becomes uneasy and fidgety because his dirty environment negatively affects his mind and psychology. He can’t blame anyone else for his misfortunes for it is his own doing. If he does not realize this and clean his house then he has not only to live in filth for the rest of his life but his psychology is also disturbed so much as to negatively affect his personality, behaviour and character. In due course of time, he becomes a laughing stock of the world and his progeny is known shunned by others as being lowly and outcaste.

In other words, when a Jiva becomes careless, allows himself to become indulgent in the world, finding charm in its temptations, and in the process forgetting his true nature as being the blissful and contented Atma, he can never find peace and happiness. On the contrary, this Jiva remains perpetually restless, acquires all vices and evil associated with the world, commits all sorts of sins in order to fulfill the desires of his body and meet the needs of his sense organs. He does not practice self-control, and has lost all sense of wisdom and propriety. In brief, the Jiva has fallen in the deep abyss of delusions and ignorance, and their accompanying spiritual darkness that creates countless miseries for him.]

The ears have become dirty and choked (deaf) by listening to criticism of others (*paranindā suni śravana malina bhē*); and the tongue has become dirty and stiff (dumb) talking ill and finding faults with others (*bacana dōṣa para gāyē*).

Forsooth I say truly that the big burden of faults, flaws, weaknesses, vices, sins, evils and other shortcomings have been dogging me (*saba prakāra malabhāra lāga*) because unfortunately I have forgotten (or have neglected, out of my ignorance, to submit myself and seek refuge at) the holy feet of my revered Lord Sri Ram (*nija nātha-carana bisarāyē*)³ (3).

[³Tulsidas affirms that all spiritual and moral problems that he faces in this world are due to his distancing himself from the holy feet of Lord Ram, due to his error of not submitting himself at the holy feet of Lord Ram, because had he done it the Lord would have taken excellent care of his well-being and welfare, and he wouldn’t had to suffer like he is suffering now. He would have been happy and joyful; he would have been contented and blissful; he would not have felt miserable and tormented by the world and its temptations and delusions.]

For washing (i.e. getting rid of or eliminating) these burden of worldly sins and spiritual miseries, the Vedas describes various solutions in the form of austerities, penances, religious vows, charity, wisdom, and acquisition of true knowledge etc. (*brata-dāna, gyāna-tapa, sud'dhihētu śruti gāvai*), but oh Tulsidas (*tulasidāsa*), without the water in the form of love, affection and devotion for the holy feet of Sri Ram (*rāma-carana-anurāga-nīra binu*), none of these faults and their

accompanying miseries can ever be eliminated from their roots (mala ati nāsa na pāvai)⁴ (4).

[⁴Refer: verse no. 81, stanza no. 5 which speaks of the same thing.

The meaning of this stanza in the context of this verse is self-evident. Tulsidas affirms that though there are various methods available for a person to overcome the many spiritual problems he is facing in this world, but as far as he is concerned the only sure-shot remedy is having devotion for Lord Ram and surrendering at the holy feet of the Lord.]

Journey Through Life

Rāga Jaitasrī

(83)

कछु है न आई गयो जनम जाय ।
 अति दुरलभ तनु पाइ कपट तजि भजे न राम मन—बचन—काय ।।1।।
 लरिकाई बीती अचेत चित, चंचलता चौगुने चाय ।
 जोबन—जुर जुबती कुपथ्य करि, भयो त्रिदोष भरि मदन बाय ।।2।।
 मध्य बयस धन हेतु गँवाई, कृषी बनजि नाना उपाय ।
 राम—बिमुख सुख लह्यो न सपनेहुँ, निसिबासर तयौ तिहूँ ताय ।।3।।
 सेये नहिं सीतापति—सेवक, साधु सुमति भलि भगति भाय ।
 सुने न पुलकि तनु, कहे न मुदित मन, किये जे चरित रघुबंसराय ।।4।।
 अब सोचत मनि बिनु भुअंग ज्यों, बिकल अंग दले जरा धाय ।
 सिर धुनि—धुनि पछितात मीजि कर कोउ न मीत हित दुसह दाय ।।5।।
 जिन्ह लगि निज परलोक बिगास्यौ, ते लजात होत ठाढ़े ठाँय ।
 तुलसी अजहुँ सुमिरि रघुनाथहिं, तस्यौ गयँद जाके एक नाँय ।।6।।

(83)

kachu hvai na āī gayō janama jāya.
 ati duralabha tanu pā'i kapaṭa taji bhajē na rāma mana-bacana-kāya. 1.
 larikāī bīṭī acēta cita, cañcalatā caigunē cāya.
 jōbana-jura jubatī kupathya kari, bhayō tridōṣa bhari madana bāya. 2.
 madhya bayasa dhana hētu gamvāī, kṛṣī banija nānā upāya.
 rāma-bimukha sukha lahyō na sapanēhum, nisibāsara tayau tihūm tāya. 3.
 sēyē nahim sītāpati-sēvaka, sādhu sumati bhali bhagati bhāya.
 sunē na pulaki tanu, kahē na mudita mana, kiyē jē carita raghubansarāya. 4.
 aba sōcata mani binu bhu'aṅga jyōm, bikala aṅga dalē jarā dhāya.
 sira dhuni-dhuni pachitāta mīñji kara kō'u na mīta hita dusaha dāya. 5.
 jinha lagi nija paralōka bigāraīau, tē lajāta hōta ṭhārḥē ṭhāmāya.
 tulasī ajahum sumiri raghunāthahim, taraīau gayamda jākē ēka nāmāya. 6.

Verse no. 83—*Ah, Alas! I could not achieve or gain anything worthwhile in this life, and it has been spent in vain, in futility (*kachu hvai na āī gayō janama jāya*).

Inspite of taking birth as a human and getting a body that is regarded as rare for any living being (because the human form is the most evolved in the long chain of evolution and a most privileged one for the creature) (*ati duralabha tanu pā'i*), I had not abandoned my corrupt and deceitful ways and nature (*kapaṭa taji*), and I never used this golden opportunity to worship Lord Sri Ram sincerely and without pretensions, using all the abilities of my mind, deeds and body to serve the Lord (*bhajē na rāma mana-bacana-kāya*).

[To wit, inspite of getting the rare opportunity to do so, I did not serve the Lord devotedly and with full commitment as I should have done. I did not employ my body, my mind and my speech to serve the Lord in the way I should have done.

I hadn't worshipped Lord Ram properly, by doing righteous and auspicious deeds with my body, by devoting my mind and sub-conscience to having sufficient devotion, faith and love for the Lord, and neither did I use my tongue and faculty of speech to sing the Lord's glories in full, pray to him with honesty and faith, preach about him with vigour and raised voice, and thank the Lord profusely for the immensity of his mercy, grace and benevolence upon me. Albeit I pretended to do so, but it was not done sincerely and honestly, for I had pretended to be his devotee and follower, but this statement of mine lacked sincerity and was more of a sort of perfunctory one rather than something coming out truly from my heart; it was rather a ruse to please the world and deceive it to believe that I am a devotee of Lord God, and therefore worthy of respect and honour.]¹ (1).

[¹The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly has been repeatedly stressed in Vinai Patrika at a number of places. Some of the instances are verse nos. 84, 102, 130, 135/1, 151, 194, 198-202 etc.

It ought to be noted here that Tulsidas has used this ploy of criticizing himself to indirectly warn others about the way they are wasting their lives in false pursuit of happiness and joy. True goal of human life is to attain eternal happiness and bliss, of obtaining deliverance of the soul and finding final emancipation and salvation. It is to be an honest effort addressed to one's own self, and not done to please others or deceive the world.

By addressing and admonishing himself for wasting away his life in pretensions of holiness and righteousness instead of being true to it, he wishes to ward off accusations of being a hypocrite, one who indulges in self-praise and acquire an air of holiness around himself. He would not have succeeded in delivering his message effectively if he had not blamed himself for his shortcomings while pointing fingers at others. This erudite and blessed soul tells the world that the life is passing away quickly and in vain pursuits. There is no sense in cheating the world by pretending to be devoted to God and leading an auspicious life, while being indulgent in the world and pretending to be devout servant of the Lord so as to meet selfish ends because the world respects those who are holy, spiritually attained and devoted to God. This pretension would serve no purpose in the real term, and so its better to mend one's ways before its too late.

In the following stanzas, Tulsidas points out the usual milestones in a person's life, highlighting how its gone to waste. Why is the life deemed to have gone to waste? Because it is very rare for the soul, the Atma, to assume the form of a human being out of hundreds and thousands of forms that it has to assume during its long and tedious journey through this mortal world over countless births and generations. In none of these births the Atma found any abiding peace as it had desired. The final

chance came in the form of having a human body, and therefore this golden chance should not be frittered away but should be well used to attain eternal peace and bliss. And how is this attained in a simple and uncomplicated manner? It is by having true and sincere devotion, faith and love for Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being, the Lord God of the world. This frees the Jiva from all worldly and spiritual torments, and gives him freedom from all fetters that would tie his Atma to the endless chain of fresh birth and its consequent horrors and miseries.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line nos. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45.]

The childhood was spent unawares in utter ignorance (*larikā'ī bīṭī acēta cita*). At that time, the mind had four times more fickleness, mischief and instability as compared to the present (when the individual has attained adulthood) (*cañcalatā caigunē cāya*).

[To wit, during my childhood, I, like other human beings, was more concerned with playing and eating and deriving worldly happiness and pleasure. My mind thought of nothing else but these small joys of the mortal world.]

When adolescence or adulthood approached, wrong diet in the form of lust and passion for a woman (wife) resulted in the whole body being on fire like some fever overcoming me (*jōbana-jura jubatī kupathya kari*), and I was afflicted by a serious disease known as 'Kaam' (lust, passion, cupid, lasciviousness) that made my condition delirious and all the more precarious and dangerous as it was equivalent to a serious ailment that afflicts one's body when the three basic elements of it get disturbed (*bhayō tridōṣa bhari madana bāya*)² (2).

[²According to ancient medical practice, a person's body is diseased when the balance of cough, bile and wind get disturbed. Tulsidas here alludes to this fact.]

The middle-age was wasted away in earning money and acquiring worldly fortunes by various vocations and professions (*madhya bayasa dhana hētu gamvā'ī*) such as farming, trade and many other means (*kṛṣī baniya nānā upāya*).

But during this time I (representing any ordinary person in general terms) was so engrossed in my activities and pursuits, being extremely preoccupied with the work at hand, that I neglected Lord Sri Ram, and because of this negligence there was no peace for me even in my dreams (*rāma-bimukha sukha lahyō na sapanēhum*).

Verily, instead of having peace (which was like a distant dream for the creature), I was always tormented by the three sufferings associated with life in this world (*nisibāsara tayau tihūṁ tāya*)³. (3).

[³Refer: Verse no. 81, stanza no. 1, and verse no. 17, stanza no. 2 to know more about the three torments associated with the world. Briefly, these three sufferings are called the 'Traitaap', and they are Adhibhautik, Adhidaivik and Adhyatmik.]

Neither did I ever serve sincerely those who themselves served Lord Sri Ram in some way (*sēyē nahim sītāpati-sēvaka*) nor did I serve pious saints who were wise and enlightened and who had devotion for the Lord (*sādhu sumati bhali bhagati bhāya*).

I had no time to either cheerfully hear with a thrilled body (*sunē na pulaki tanu*) nor to speak, talk and discuss with an exhilarated mind and heart (*kahē na mudita mana*) any of the divine deeds done by Lord Ram or any of the stories related to him during his incarnation on earth as the exalted Lord of the Raghu dynasty (*kiyē*

jē carita raghubansarāya), something that would have given me true joy and happiness³ (4).

[³I was so busy with the affairs of mundane life that whenever I wished to have some joy and peace and relax my weary mind and body, I would seek them from some thing or the other of the sensual pleasures and objects of the world, instead of being wise enough to turn my attention to hearing the divine stories of Lord Ram, and singing songs and hymns in his praise that too would have given me joy and happiness; albeit this latter joy and happiness would have been better for me and my spiritual welfare, but I unfortunately bartered it for worldly pleasures. So this chance was also wasted away.]

Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, took birth as a great King in the race of Kings descending from King Raghu of Ayodhya.]

Now that the old age has appeared and has broken my body and afflicted all the parts it with so many problems, making me feeble, wornout and virtually incapacitated (bikala aṅga dalē jarā dhāya), I worry and regret like a serpent who has been robbed of its Mani (a luminiscent sac on its hood) (aba sōcata mani binu bhu'aṅga jyōm)⁴.

I lament by beating my head and wringing my hands in frustration (sira dhuni-dhuni pachitāta mīñji kara). But at this time, I don't find any friend or kin to douse this terrible Fire that rages inside me and burns me endlessly (kō'u na mīta hita dusaha dāya)⁵ (5).

[⁴According to mythology, there is a special species of serpents who carry a luminescent sac on the top of their hoods. They come out in the dark of the night and forage for food in the light of this sac. If someone steals this sac, the serpent is extremely agitated and often becomes blind. It then thrashes its own hood by hitting on the ground or against some stone, and kills its self.

⁵In old age, the body has become too weak to enjoy the pleasures of the world. Now I want some help from those for whom I had toiled my whole life. But no one is concerned: see the following stanza. So now I have begun to repent and lament; but it is too late to mend and do some amend for the time lost. When I was serving this world as an adult, there were so many friends and companions, but now all of them have left me alone to face the horrors of my destiny. No one comes forward to help me when my body is unable to support me, and the same persons for whom I had toiled day and night now turn away from me.

Woe to me! Why didn't I realize that all are selfish and false friends when I had time; why did I not realize that my true friend is Lord Ram who will stand by me in thick and thin, who will help me when everyone abandons me. Woe betide me: I had so stupidly forgotten this dear Lord of mine! See the next stanza herein below.]

Those for whom all sorts of sins were committed by me, thereby ruining the prospects of salvation and peace for myself (i.e. liberation from the shackles of this mundane world, from the cycle of birth and death and re-birth, as well as the chances of permanent attainment of peace and rest for the self) (jinha lagi nija paralōka bigāraṇau), are now feeling reluctant and averse to even stand near me (for they fear that I will ask them to do this or that menial task for me; alas, they don't even recognise me, what to talk of sharing my agonies) (tē lajāta hōta ṭhārḥē ṭhām̐ya).

Oh Tulsidas! It is still not too late for you to remember Lord Sri Ram (tulāsī ajahum̐ sumiri raghunāthahim̐), remembrance of whose single holy Name helped

the elephant known as Gaja to cross over from this ocean-like world and get instant salvation (*taraiaṁ gayamāda jākē ēka nāmāya*)⁶ (6).

[⁶The story of the Elephant is briefly narrated in verse no. 57, note appended to stanza no. 3 of this Book “Vinai Patrika”.

Tulsidas asserts that it is never too late for a person to wake up from delusions and ignorance, and become wisened and enlightened to the Truth. Lord Ram’s holy Name is so powerful and effective that if a creature realizes his mistakes and turns to it for seeking help to attain liberation and deliverance for his soul, let him be reassured that he will get his wishes fulfilled. It’s better late than never!]

*[Note—The idea expressed in this verse is also reiterated in another verse no. 234 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

Oh mind! Don't regret later on if you don't wake up now

(84)

तौ तू पछितैहै मन मींजि हाथ ।
भयो है सुगम तोको अमर—अगम तन, समुझिधौं कत खोवत अकाथ ॥1॥
सुख—साधन हरि—बिमुख बृथा जैसे श्रम फल घृतहिय मथे पाथ ।
यह बिचारि, तजि कुपथ—कुसंगति, चलि सुपंथ मिलि भले साथ ॥2॥
देखु राम—सेवक, सुनि कीरति, रटहि नाम करि गान गाथ ।
हृदय आनु धनुबान—पानि प्रभु, लसे मुनिपट, कटि कसे भाथ ॥3॥
तुलसिदास परिहरि प्रपंच सब, नाउ रामपद—कमल माथ ।
जनि डरपहि तोसे अनेक खल, अपनाये जानकीनाथ ॥4॥

(84)

tau tū pachitaihai mana mīñji hātha.
bhayō hai sugama tōkō amara-agama tana, samujhidhaurṁ kata khōvata
akātha. 1.
sukha-sādhana hari-bimukha br̥thā jaisē śrama phala ghr̥tahiya mathē pātha.
yaha bicāri, taji kupatha-kusaṅgati, cali supantha mili bhalē sātha. 2.
dēkhu rāma-sēvaka, suni kīrati, raṭahi nāma kari gāna gātha.
hr̥daya ānu dhanubāna-pāni prabhu, lasē munipaṭa, kaṭi kasē mātha. 3.
tulasidāsa parihari prapañca saba, nā'u rāmapada-kamala bhātha.
jani ḍarapahi tōsē anēka khala, apanāyē jānakīnātha. 4.

Verse no. 84—[Continuing with what he has said in verse no. 83, Tulsidas now asks his mind, and through it his own inner-self, to be alert to his warnings so that they do not have to regret and lament later on. In this context of advice given to the mind or the Mana, refer to other verses of Vinai Patrika which also express similar idea—viz. verse nos. 85, 87-90, 124, 126, 143, 196, 199 etc.]

Oh my Mana (mind and heart)! You would have to wring your hands in regret (if you do not pay heed to my advice) (**tau tū pachitaihai mana mīñji hātha**).

Listen carefully. You have so easily received the human body which is rare and difficult even for the Gods (**bhayō hai sugama tōkō amara-agama tana**).

Just spare a little thought to it and try to understand—why do you lose it in vain (**samujhidhaum kata khōvata akātha**)¹? (1).

[¹The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly has been repeatedly stressed in Vinai Patrika at a number of places. Some of the instances are verse nos. 83, 102, 130, 135/1, 151, 194, 198-202 etc.]

The materials and pursuits that provide worldly comforts and pleasures, but which turn the creature away from Lord Hari (the Lord God), are as useless, worthless and futile (**sukha-sādhana hari-bimukha br̥thā**) just like an attempt to extract Ghee (fat, clarified butter, oil) by churning of water (**jaisē śrama phala ghṛtahiya mathē pātha**).

[To wit, if you think that you will get real peace and happiness by pursuing the world and its material sense objects, you are running behind a mirage that gives fruits which are transient, false, illusive, deluding and ensnaring. Realise and understand that true bliss and peace is where Lord Hari is, and trying to get them by pursuing or serving materialistic world is absolutely stupid, futile and an insane expectation.]

Hence, think over this matter carefully (**yaha bicāri**) and leave the path that is evil, sinful and unrighteousness, and abandon the company of unrighteous and unscrupulous people (**taji kupatha-kusaṅgati**). Instead of it, walk on the path of righteousness, scrupulousness and noble conduct, and have the company of saintly people, following the path shown by them (**cali supantha mili bhalē sātha**). (2).

Watch the example of devotees and followers of Lord Ram (**dēkhu rāma-sēvaka**): see how they lead their lives, hear from them the Lord's divine stories and glories (**sunī kīrati**), constantly chant (repeat) Lord Sri Ram's holy Name (**raṭahi nāma**), sing the glories of Lord Ram (**kari gāna gātha**), and meditate in your heart on the divine form of the Lord with a bow and arrow in his hands (**hr̥daya ānu dhanubāna-pāni prabhu**), attired like a hermit (**lasē munipaṭa**), and having a quiver tied around his waist (**kaṭi kasē bhātha**). (3).

Oh Tulsidas! Abandoning all scheming, deceit, crookedness and pretensions in this world (**tulasidāsa parihari prapañca saba**), bow your head reverentially at the holy lotus-feet of Lord Sri Ram (**nā'u rāmapada-kamala mātha**).

Don't be afraid (of your past mischief and sins) (**jani ḍarapahi**), for Lord Sri Ram (who is also known as Jankinath) has accepted many who were lowly, mean, downtrodden, deprived, wretched and poor like you (and even worse than you) (**tōsē anēka khala, apanāyē jānakīnātha**)² (4).

[²Refer to verse nos. 217-218 of this book Vinai Patrika in this context.]

Rāga Dhanāśrī

(85)

मन! माधवको नेकु निहारहि ।
 सुनु सठ, सदा रंकके धन ज्यों, छिन छिन प्रभुहिं सँभारहि ।।1।।
 सोभा—सील—ग्यान—गुन—मंदिर, सुंदर परम उदारहि ।
 रंजन संत, अखिल अध—गंजन, भंजन विषय—बिकारहि ।।2।।
 जो बिनु जोग—जग्य—व्रत—संजम गयो चहै भव—पारहि ।
 तौ जनि तुलसिदास निसि—बासर हरि—पद—कमल बिसारहि ।।3।।

(85)

mana! mādHAVakō nēku nihārahi.
 sunu saṭha, sadā raṅkakē dhana jyōm, china china prabhuhiṁ sam̐bhārahi. 1.
 sōbhā-sīla-gyāna-guna-mandira, sundara parama udārahi.
 raṅjana santa, akhila adha-gaṅjana, bhaṅjana viṣaya-bikārahi. 2.
 jō binu jōga-jagya-vrata-saṅjama gayō cahai bhava-pārahi.
 tau jani tulasidāsa nisi-bāsara hari-pada-kamala bisārahi. 3.

Verse no. 85—[Addressing himself, Tulsidas tells his mind—] ‘Oh my Mana (mind and heart)! Just have a glance at Sri Madhav (which is one of the many names of Lord Vishnu whose incarnation was Lord Ram) (mana! mādHAVakō nēku nihārahi).

Oh you stupid and wicked fellow, listen (to my wise advice) (sunu saṭha)! Just as a pauper keeps glancing longingly every now and then (china china) at whatever little treasure he has to ensure its safety as well as to derive comfort by viewing it (sadā raṅkakē dhana jyōm), so should you too constantly remember your Lord Sri Ram and be careful about it (because he is also a priceless treasure that ensures your peace and welfare of your soul) (china china prabhuhiṁ sam̐bhārahi) (1).

Lord Sri Ram is an abode of beauty and magnificence, is polite and has an excellent character and temperament, is a treasure of wisdom and knowledge, and abounds in all other good virtues (sōbhā-sīla-gyāna-guna-mandira).

He is handsome, beautiful (in the spiritual sense), and very magnanimous and charitable in his disposition as he is a gracious donor who gives liberally without inhibitions (sundara parama udārahi).

He makes saints happy and contented (raṅjana santa); he is the destroyer of all sins, vices and evils (akhila adha-gaṅjana); and he destroys (removes, eliminates) all the faults that are generated by indulgences in sensual pleasures of the materialistic world (bhaṅjana viṣaya-bikārahi) (2).

Oh Tulsidas (tulasidāsa)! If you want to easily cross the ocean symbolised by this mundane world (gayō cahai bhava-pārahi) without taking recourse to such arduous methods such as Yoga (meditation, concentration on the Lord), Yagya (religious sacrifices and rituals), Vrat (religious observances and keeping of vows), and Sayam

(austerities and self-control) (jō binu jōga-jagya-vrata-sanjama)—then do not ever forget Lord Ram and let your mind be deflected from the remembrance of the holy lotus-feet of the Lord; remember the Lord day and night, every moment of your life (tau jani nisi-bāsara hari-pada-kamala bisārahi) (3).

Mother Suniti's Advice to her son Dhrūva

(86)

इहै कह्यो सुत! बेद चहूँ।
 श्रीरघुबीर—चरन—चिंतन तजि नाहिंन ठौर कहूँ।।1।।
 जाके चरन बिरचि सेइ सिद्धि पाई संकरहूँ।
 सुक—सनकादि मुकुत बिचरत तेउ भजन करत अजहूँ।।2।।
 जद्यपि परम चपल श्री संतत, थिर न रहति कतहूँ।
 हरि—पद—पंकज पाइ अचल भइ, करम—बचन—मनहूँ।।3।।
 करुनासिंधु, भगत—चिंतामनि, सोभा सेवतहूँ।
 और सकल सुर, असुर—ईस सब खाये उरग छहूँ।।4।।
 सुरुचि कह्यो सोइ सत्य तात अति परुष बचन जबहूँ।
 तुलसीदास रघुनाथ—बिमुख नहिं मिटइ बिपति कबहूँ।।5।।

(86)

ihai kahyō suta! bēda cahūṁ.
 śrīraghubīra-carana-cintana taji nāhinna ṭhaura kahūṁ. 1.
 jākē carana biran̄ci sē'i sidhi pā'ī saṅkaraḥūṁ.
 suka-sanakādi mukuta bicarata tē'u bhajana karata ajahūṁ. 2.
 jadyapi parama capala śrī santata, thira na rahati katahūṁ.
 hari-pada-paṅkaja pā'i acala bha'i, karama-bacana-manahūṁ. 3.
 karunāsindhu, bhagata-cintāmani, sōbhā sēvatahūṁ.
 aura sakala sura, asura-īsa saba khāyē uraga chahūṁ. 4.
 suruci kahyō sō'i satya tāta ati paruṣa bacana jabahūṁ.
 tulasīdāsa raghunātha-bimukha nahim̄ miṭa'i bipati kabahūṁ. 5.

Verse no. 86—(Devotee Dhruv's mother Suniti had advised her son :-) ‘Oh son! All the 4 Vedas assert (ihai kahyō suta bēda cahūṁ) that the soul has no succour and destination anywhere else except at the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (śrīraghubīra-carana-cintana taji nāhinna ṭhaura kahūṁ) (1).

These holy feet of the Lord are the ones by serving and meditating upon which even Brahma and Shiva (the two Gods of the Trinity, the creator and concluder of creation respectively) have attained all success and every accomplishment for which they are renowned as Great Gods (jākē carana biran̄ci sē'i sidhi pā'ī saṅkaraḥūṁ).

Sages Shuk (the parrot sage) and Sankadi (the celestial sages) have obtained liberation (from the cycle of birth and death), and they now roam freely (without fear or worry of death) in the world, all the while remembering the Lord constantly and

worshipping him and his holy feet (suka-sanakādi mukuta bicarata tē'u bhajana karata ajahūṃ) (2).

Although Laxmi (the goddess of wealth) is very unstable and transient, and never stays permanently at one place (jadyapi parama capala śrī santata, thira na rahati katahūṃ), but even she has become stable when she got the chance to serve the holy lotus like feet of the Lord¹, which she does with great devotion, involving her mind, speech and actions (without ever thinking of moving away from this service) (hari-pada-paṅkaja pā'i acala bha'i, karama-bacana-manahūṃ) (3).

[¹Goddess Laxmi is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, and is the patron goddess of material wealth and prosperity. In this world, wealth and prosperity come and go; a person may be poor now but may become rich some day, only to lose everything under misfortune.

In her celestial form, Laxmi is said to be serving the holy feet of Lord Vishnu, and in this she is extremely diligent and careful. When Vishnu came down to earth as Lord Ram to fulfil some obligations, Laxmi accompanied the Lord in the form of Sita.

What Dhruv's mother means is that even Laxmi, who has a natural habit of fickleness, restlessness and uncertainty, becomes stable when she began to serve Lord Vishnu's holy feet. So, if her son Dhruv wishes to have eternal peace, stable fame and lasting life than he must do what Laxmi did—which is to begin serving the holy feet of the Lord, here referring both to Lord Vishnu, and his human form as Lord Ram.]

He (Lord Sri Ram) is an ocean of mercy and compassion (karunāsindhu), and is like a 'cintāmani' (a gem said to vanquish all worries) for all his devotees (bhagata-cintāmani).

Forsooth and without gainsay, it is an honourable and worthy thing for one to serve and worship the Lord as it is the most correct and proper thing to do because it leads the way to attainment of all goodness, greatness and lasting peace and stability in one's life (sōbhā sēvatahūṃ).

[None of the other gods are worthy of this respect because—] All other gods and non-gods who rule over the world are bitten by the six poisonous snakes², and hence not suitable for doing service to (aura sakala sura, asura-īsa saba khāyē uraga chahūṃ) (4).

[²The six symbolic serpents who have bitten all other gods and non-gods in this world, thereby injecting their characterised poisons into the latter and corrupting them, are the following: (i) Kaam (desire, lust, passion), (ii) Krodha (anger, wrath, indignation, vengeance), (iii) Lobha (greed, avarice, covetousness), (iv) Mada (arrogance, hypocrisy, pride), (v) Moha (attachments, infatuation and allurements), and (vi) Maatsarya (envy, jealousy and malice).

To wit, when these gods and other powers that control the world are under these negative influences outlined herein above, how can a creature expect justice at their hands? If unfortunately someone unwittingly approaches any one of these gods and powers, the response that is expected will be tampered with one or the other negative traits, listed above, that is dominant in that particular god or power.

It is only Lord Vishnu who is free from this corruption, and hence the Lord is the most suitable Lord from whom one can expect true justice and fulfilment of one's desires and needs, without any selfish interest of Lord Vishnu impinging upon the response he gives to his devotee that may adversely affect the latter's well-being.]

Oh my dear Son (“tāta”--Dhruv)! Your step-mother Suruchi³ has said the truth though it sounds very unpleasant and offensive to hear in the beginning or at face value (suruci kahyō sō'i satya ati paruṣa bacana jabahūṁ)!’

[Tulsidas endorses what Dhruv’s mother advised her son. He addresses himself and says—] ‘Oh Tulsidas! The troubles and tribulations can never be overcome and destroyed if one remains opposed to or negligent towards Lord Sri Ram (tulasīdāsa raghunātha-bimukha nahim̐ miṭa'i bipati kabahūṁ).’ (5).

[³King Uttanpad had two queens—Suruchi and Suniti, but the king favoured Suruchi more. Once, Suniti's son Dhruv sat on the lap of his father while Suruchi's son was also sitting on his other lap. Suruchi could not tolerate this due to jealousy and malice, and admonished Dhruv and pulled the child down from his father's lap. The child was so emotionally hurt that he went crying to his mother Suruchi. Then the latter consoled her son, telling him that his real father was the Lord God, that he should strive to attain him and sit on his laps, and for that he has to have devotion and do severe austerities and penances. Moved, Dhruv did what was told and had a personal divine viewing (Darshan) of the Lord, and as a boon received a stable position in the heavens represented by the so-called “North Star”, also called “Dhruv-Tara” in local folklore to commemorate Dhruv’s Tapa and his subsequent blessing by the Lord.]

Advice to the mind

(The bad consequences of not having devotion for Lord Ram)

(87)

सुनु मन मूढ सिखावन मेरो ।
हरि-पद-बिमुख लह्यो न काहु सुख, सठ! यह समुझ सबेरो ॥1॥
बिछुरे ससि-रबि मन-नैननितें, पावत दुख बहुतेरो ।
भ्रमत श्रमित निसि-दिवस गगन महँ, तहँ रिपु राहु बड़ेरो ॥2॥
जद्यपि अति पुनीत सुरसरिता, तिहुँ पुर सुजस घनेरो ।
तजे चरन अजहँ न मित्त नित, बहिबो ताहू केरो ॥3॥
छुटै न बिपति भजे बिनु रघुपति, श्रुति संदेहु निबेरो ।
तुलसिदास सब आस छाँड़ि करि, होहु रामको चेरो ॥4॥

(87)

sunu mana mūr̥ha sikhāvana mērō.
hari-pada-bimukha lahyō na kāhu sukha, saṭha! yaha samujha sabērō. 1.
bichurē sasi-rabi mana-nainanitēm̐, pāvata dukha bahutērō.
bhramata śramita nisi-divasa gagana maham̐, taham̐ ripu rāhu baṛērō. 2.
jadyapi ati punīta surasaritā, tihum̐ pura sujasa ghanērō.
tajē carana ajahūṁ na miṭata nita, bahibō tāhū kērō. 3.
chuṭai na bipati bhajē binu raghupati, śruti sandēhu nibērō.

tulasidāsa saba āsa chāmḍi kari, hōhu rāmakō cērō. 4.

Verse no. 87—[Tulsidas addresses himself and his Mana, i.e. his mind, and alerts it as follows—] ‘Oh you foolish Mind of mine (mana mūṛha)! Listen to my advice (sunu sikhāvana mērō): no one has got happiness without having devotion for the holy feet of Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) (hari-pada-bimukha lahyō na kāhu sukha).

Oh you stupid rascal (saṭha)! Understand this fact as soon as you can, for then you will have the light of dawn¹ (“yaha samujha sabērō”).

[¹To wit, the moment you realise that your true happiness lies in surrendering to Lord Ram, serving the Lord’s feet and having devotion for him, it will be like the dawn of a new day for you. Just as the dawn brings cheer and is the harbinger of new energy and life after the fearfull darkness of the previous night, you too will enjoy fearlessness and cheerfulness in life.] (1).

See! Ever since the sun and the moon assumed independent identities as physical celestial bodies after getting separated from the cosmic form of the Lord as his eyes and the heart respectively (bichurē sasi-rabi mana-nainanitērṁ)², they are suffering from a lot of torments, sorrows and agonies (pāvata dukha bahutērō).

They get tired of making constant rounds in the sky day and night (bhramata śramita nisi-divasa gagana mahamṁ), with the strong enemy known as Rahu in hot pursuit of them (tahamṁ ripu rāhu barērō)³. [The sun and the moon are constantly on the run in the sky, changing their location every other moment in order to escape Rahu that follows them from behind. They become weary of this chase, but aren’t able to rest even for a while. But inspite of this, Rahu manages to catch hold of them when they think they have managed to escape and exult in their achievement as soon their enemy caught hold of them and gobbles them up during the solar and lunar eclipses.] (2).

[²According to the Upanishads and the Purans, the ‘sun’ originally is envisioned as being the subtle eye, and the ‘moon’ as the subtle heart of the invisible, all-encompassing cosmic form of the Supreme Being, a form known as the ‘Viraat Purush’. Here, the word “Viraat” means vast and infinite, and “Purush” means a Divine Being. This Viraat Purush is also a synonym for Lord Vishnu.

But as this creation evolved from the subtlest to more grosser forms, these two entities, i.e. the sun and the moon, lost their subtlety and assumed a gross form just like Vishnu assumed a gross human body as Lord Ram.

Now, till the time the sun and the moon were close to the Viraat Purush, the demon Rahu, the demon with a severed head, did not dare to trouble them. But once they assumed the form of independent gods themselves, viz. the ‘sun god’ and the ‘moon god’ revealed in the form of two celestial bodies known as the ‘sun’ and the ‘moon’, the demon Rahu started tormenting them by way of periodically devouring them for some time, an event that creates the solar and the lunar eclipses respectively.

In other words, Tulsidas warns his mind not to distance itself from Lord Ram, but remain always submerged in the thought of the Lord, for otherwise it would be eclipsed or overcome by the different faults and negative traits of the world.

³The story of why and how ‘Rahu’ torments the sun and the moon is briefly narrated at the end of this verse. Refer also to verse no. 58, stanza no. 1 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.]

Although the river Ganges is called the ‘river of Gods’ and is very pure and holy (jadyapi ati punīta surasaritā), its fame spread in all the three divisions of this world (“tīhum̐ pura sujasa ghanērō”—i.e. the heaven, the earth and the nether world), but still, ever since it abandoned the feet of the Lord (because it emerged from the toe of Lord Vishnu and moved away from it in the form of a current that descended upon the earth as the river by this name), it has to flow constantly (i.e. it did not find a permanent resting place for itself) (tajē carana ajahūṁ na miṭata nita, bahibō tāhū kērō). [And not only this, while earlier it flowed in the heaven and had crystal clean and pure water, once it separated from the feet of Lord Vishnu and in due course of time descended to this gross world, it became dirty and polluted.] (3).

None of the troubles, torments, miseries and sorrows can ever be destroyed or eliminated without worshipping, having devotion for and venerating Lord Raghupati Sri Ram (chuṭai na bipati bhajē binu raghupati).

[To wit, without having devotion, love, affection and reverence for the Lord, a creature can never find happiness and peace for himself, and would continue to suffer interminably.]

Any doubt about the veracity of this fact has been removed by the Vedas (i.e. the Vedas unanimously endorse this view) (śruti sandēhu nibērō).

Therefore, oh Tulsidas, become a devoted servant (i.e. an ardent devotee and follower) of Lord Sri Ram after abandoning all other hopes of succour and solace from any other source (tulasidāsa saba āsa chāmḍi kari, hōhu rāmakō cērō) (4).

[Note—³Ripu Rāhu:-- The legend has it that Rahu was the eldest son of the demon Viprachitti and his wife Shinghikaa. His younger brothers were Ilvala, Vaataapi, Narak amongst others. When Lord Vishnu, disguised as the beautiful Mohini, was distributing the ambrosia of eternity called Amrit to the Gods during the episode of the churning of the ocean as told in the Purans, Rahu assumed the form of a God and surreptitiously entered the lines of the Gods to take this Amrit. When his cheating was discovered, Vishnu cut-off his head with his weapon called the Chakra Sudarshan (a circular saw-like discus). But it so happened that before the head was severed Rahu had already drunk some Amrit, and so did not die. His head and torso became two independent entities. The former was called ‘Rahu’ and the latter ‘Ketu’. Since the Moon God and the Sun God had betrayed him, Rahu takes revenge by devouring them periodically to satisfy his hunger. He devours them when they are in their full glory—viz. he devours the Moon God during the full moon night, and the Sun God only during the day time, either when the sun rises or during its journey across the sky, but never at sunset when the sun is already losing its radiance and is on the decline.

Again, since the head of Rahu was severed from the neck, hence both the Moon God and the Sun God re-emerge from the lower end of the head after they have been devoured by the mouth of Rahu. This is why the moon and the sun appear to be getting gradually cut-off from view from one end of their discs, symbolizing their gradually entering the mouth of Rahu as the latter begins to devour them. Then for some time they remain dark or obstructed from view symbolizing the period when they remain inside the mouth of Rahu. Finally, they gradually regain their original shape symbolizing their ejection from the lower end of Rahu’s neck where it was severed from the trunk.

Thus we see that the mythological origin of the solar and lunar eclipse can be traced to this event of the churning of the ocean and the demon Rahu getting his head cut-off because he had cheated Vishnu in an attempt to drink Amrit. But having

already drunk this elixir, he could not die; the head became Rahu and the trunk became Ketu (a comet). Because of this enmity, Rahu extracted a boon that he would eat the sun and the moon periodically when he felt hungry, which, according to mythology, he does during the solar and lunar eclipses respectively. The sun or the moon enter his mouth (the beginning of the eclipse), and emerge from his severed throat (marking the end of eclipse).

The story of Rahu appears in Srimad Bhagwat Maha Puran, Chapter 8, Canto 9. Actually however, the phenomenon of the lunar eclipse is due to the earth's shadow falling on the moon's surface when it comes in the path of this shadow during its revolution around the earth. This scientific fact was known to the great Rishis (sages and seers) who had preached the Upanishads, and it is clearly mentioned in Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which says "When the moon is said to be devoured by the demon Rahu (the severed head of a demon) during the lunar eclipse, people start offering worship, making sacrifices, doing penances, taking purifying baths, giving alms and making charities, observing austerities etc. so that the Moon God is freed from the demon's curse, but all their deeds are a waste of effort and done in utter ignorance because there is no such event, and the darkness on the moon's disc is actually a shadow of the earth falling upon it. This shadow would go away on its own when the time comes even if no such hue and cry is raised by worried worshippers. So it is a height of stupidity and profound ignorance to even think that the Moon God has been cursed or is being devoured, and by doing so many religious deeds it can be freed from its torments." Similarly, the solar eclipse is caused when the moon comes in between the shiny surface of the sun and the view from earth, thereby blocking the former's view from the latter's surface.

The elongated torso of Rahu came to known as 'Ketu' and it is recognized as the comet in modern science. That is why sighting of the comet is regarded as a bad omen.

Both Rahu and Ketu are placed amongst the nine planets. They represent the two nodal points where the celestial equator cuts the ecliptic.

In iconography, Rahu is depicted as just a head or even as a snake's hood.]

The importance of wisdom and true knowledge

(88)

कबहूँ मन बिश्राम न मान्यो ।
 निसिदिन भ्रमत बिसारि सहज सुख, जहँ तहँ इंद्रिन तान्यो ॥1॥
 जदपि बिषय-सँग सह्यो दुसह दुख, बिषम जाल अरुझान्यो ।
 तदपि न तजत मूढ़ ममताबस, जानतहूँ नहिं जान्यो ॥2॥
 जनम अनेक किये नाना बिधि करम-कीच चित सान्यो ।
 होइ न बिमल बिबेक-नीर-बिनु, बेद पुरान बखान्यो ॥3॥
 निज हित नाथ पिता गुरु हरिसों हरषि हृदै नहिं आन्यो ।
 तुलसिदास कब तृषा जाय सर खनतहिं जनम सिरान्यो ॥4॥

(88)

kabahūṁṁ mana biśrāma na mān'yō.
 nisidina bhramata bisāri sahaja sukha, jahamṁ tahamṁ indrina tān'yō. 1.
 jadapi biṣaya-saṁgā sahyō dusaha dukha, biṣama jāla arujhān'yō.
 tadapi na tajata mūrha mamatābasa, jānatahūṁṁ nahim jān'yō. 2.
 janama anēka kiyē nānā bidhi karama-kīca cita sān'yō.
 hō'i na bimala bibēka-nīra-binu, bēda purāna bakhān'yō. 3.
 nija hita nātha pitā guru harisōm haraṣi hṛdai nahim ān'yō.
 tulasidāsa kaba ṛṣā jāya sara khanatahim janama sirān'yō. 4.

Verse no. 88—Oh my mind and heart (collectively known as the “mana”)! You have never taken rest and are always very fidgety and fickle (kabahūṁṁ mana biśrāma na mān'yō).

Having forgotten your inherent and natural blissful form, you have wandered aimlessly here and there like a vagrant, being endlessly enticed by the pleasures of the sense organs of the body, and getting pulled day and night by the deluding charms of the world of sense objects (nisidina bhramata bisāri sahaja sukha, jahamṁ tahamṁ indrina tān'yō)¹ (1).

[¹The inherent nature of the creature's ‘true self’, called his Atma, which is pure consciousness, is blissful and contented. But unfortunately this Atma lives in a gross body which has gross sense organs, and the natural tendency or inclination of these organs is to seek pleasure and comfort for themselves from the respective sense objects of the external world. For instance, the ‘eye’ would always like to see beautiful things in this world. The problem arises when these sense organs are not under control of the Mana and are allowed to have their say in the life of a creature. The desires and needs of these sense organs are endless, and if one desire is satisfied then immediately another arises; it's a vicious cycle. This silently robs the Mana of its peace and calmness because it is forced to oblige these sense organs of the host body, otherwise they would make life hell for the creature.

In this verse, Tulsidas is addressing this problem of the Mana.]

Although you have suffered heavily and have been trapped in a difficult snare from which it is equally difficult for you to get out due to the company of sensual objects of this materialistic world that you so assiduously try to keep (jadapi biṣaya-saṁgā sahyō dusaha dukha, biṣama jāla arujhān'yō), oh you idiot (mūrha), you still do not abandon them and become alert because you are enslaved to attachments and have developed affection towards them (tadapi na tajata mamatābasa).

You are so dumb-witted that in spite of being aware of the truth of all this you willingly continue to feign ignorance about your problems and the cause for them (jānatahūṁṁ nahim jān'yō).

[To wit, even though the creature knows that it is suffering so much and that all its problems are caused by its involvement with the world and appeasement of the sense organs of the body, it still turns a blind eye to them, and continues to plunge in this slush again and again.] (2).

Oh Mana! You smeared yourself and got covered by a thick layer of filth, muck and slush created as a result of the various deeds done by you over different births (janama anēka kiyē nānā bidhi karama-kīca cita sān'yō).

The Vedas and Purans (ancient scriptures) advise (*bēda purāna bakhān'yō*) that this muck and dirt sticking to you cannot be washed away without obtaining the water of wisdom and true knowledge (*hō'i na bimala bibēka-nīra-bina*).

[But, would you pay heed? Sorry, it seems that you are so stupid as to turn a deaf ear to them.] (3).

Our (i.e. all living beings') welfare and good lies only with the supreme Lord, the supreme Father and the supreme Teacher (or Guru) known as 'Lord Hari' (*nija hita nātha pitā guru harisōm*), but Alas, you (the Mana) had never accepted the Lord in your heart with conviction and enthusiasm (*haraṣi hṛdai nahim ān'yō*). [Instead of doing that, you had spent your time appeasing and gratifying the selfish sense organs of the body as well as this materialistic world and its inhabitants.]

Alas, oh Tulsidas! How can one quench his thirst from a pond if one spends the whole life in merely digging it (*tulasidāsa kaba ṛṣā jāya sara khanatahim janama sirān'yō*)?

[Tulsidas' observation is remarkable. He says that there is no use in spending a life-time digging through the texts of the voluminous scriptures if one cannot find and understand the Truth they are repeatedly speaking of.] (4).

The Stubborn Mind

(89)

मेरो मन हरिजू! हठ न तजै ।
 निसिदिन नाथ देउँ सिख बहु बिधि, करत सुभाउ निजै ।।1।।
 ज्यों जुवती अनुभवति प्रसव अति दारुन दुख उपजै ।
 है अनुकूल बिसारि सूल सठ पुनि खल पतिहिं भजै ।।2।।
 लोलुप भ्रम गृहपसु ज्यों तहँ तहँ सिर पदत्रान बजै ।
 तदपि अधम बिचरत तेहि मारग कबहूँ न मूढ लजै ।।3।।
 हौं हस्यो करि जतन बिबिध बिधि अतिसै प्रबल अजै ।
 तुलसिदास बस होइ तबहिं जब प्रेरक प्रभु बरजै ।।4।।

(89)

mērō mana harijū! haṭha na tajai.
 nisidina nātha dē'um' sikhā bahu bidhi, karata subhā'u nijai. 1.
 jyōm juvatī anubhavati prasava ati dārūna dukha upajai.
 hvai anukūla bisāri sūla saṭha puni khala patihim bhajai. 2.
 lōlupa bhrama grhāpasu jyōm taham' taham' sira padatrāna bajai.
 tadapi adhama bicarata tēhi mārāga kabahūm' na mūrha lajai. 3.
 haum harāō kari jatana bibidha bidhi atisai prabala ajai.
 tulasidāsa basa hō'i tabahim jaba prēraka prabhu barajai. 4.

Verse no. 89—[In verse no. 88, Tulsidas has admonished his Mana for his ignorance and stupidity. But he discovers that inspite of his earnest request, the Mana would not

change its old habits. So now the saintly poet turns to Lord God and prays to him about the stubborn nature of his Mana with a silent request to do something about it. He pleads with the Lord that his Mana won't listen to him, and he has failed in his best attempt to control and rein it in. So, will the Lord please step in and help him control the waywardness of his Mana, for it is only by the Lord's grace this can be done.

The central idea is that it is normal for a person to be under the restless nature of his mind, the Mana, but if he would take the shelter of the Lord, Sri Ram, and turn his attention to him, then the Mana would be easy to rein in.]

Oh Lord Hari (Ram)! My Mana (mind) does not abandon its stubbornness and arrogance (mērō mana harijū! haṭha na tajai).

Lord, I advise and preach it day and night, but it does what suits its temperament, and pays no attention to me and my advice, which nevertheless is for its own good (nisidina nātha dē'um' sikha bahu bidhi, karata subhā'u nijai). (1).

[Now, Tulsidas cites an example to explain the stubborn nature of the Mana for its refusal to learn from its sufferings.]

A woman has to undergo extreme pain at the time of a child's birth (and vows not to go near her husband again) (jyōm juvatī anubhavati prasava ati dāruna dukha upajai), but that fool forgets all the agonies she had to undergo during pregnancy and at the birth of the child, and still prefers to enjoy conjugal relationship with her husband all over again (hvai anukūla bisāri sūla saṭha puni khala patihim bhajai)¹ (2).

[¹The woman knows very well that if she becomes pregnant again, she would have to bear all the pain and suffering she had experienced during her previous pregnancy and child birth. But the pull of the sense organs and their natural urge for gratification is so overbearing that her mind and its reasoning powers are eclipsed, and she willingly accepts the full round of torments for momentary sexual pleasure.

Likewise, the Mana knows the horrifying consequences of getting attracted to the sense objects of the world and yielding to the demands of the sense organs of the body, that such doing would rob it of its peace and happiness, but this wretched fellow would still get involved in these activities like that stupid lady who willingly indulges in sexual gratification in spite of a first-hand knowledge of its consequences.]

[Now, Tulsidas cites another example of a greedy dog.]

A greedy and rapacious stray dog is beaten and kicked at every door wherever it goes, but that wretch still does not refrain from going to the same place again and again (lōlupa bhrama gṛhapasu jyōm taham' taham' sira padatrāna bajai). The fool does not feel ashamed at all at the insult that it is subjected to, and neither is it afraid of the wounds that would be inflicted upon it once again by going to someone's door (tadapi adhama bicarata tēhi māraga kabahūm' na mūrha lajai)² (3).

[²A stray dog is always hungry, looks sick and dirty. He goes from door to door, and people first shoo it away, but later on when they find that he has started coming repeatedly to howl at their doorsteps, they throw stones at him and beat him with a stick to drive the poor creature away from the front of their homes. But the irony is that this fool still goes at the same place, to be subjected to another round of abuses and beatings. This is the same situation with the Mana.

A person longs for some thing or someone, and he develops attachment with them. A time comes that the object of his adoration begins to reject him and his overtures, but this person's Mana is so obsessed with this thing or person that it would rather suffer every possible suffering to appease the object of its adoration than to realise its mistake and turn away.

The Mana is repeatedly warned that it cannot expect true and lasting peace and happiness by pursuing this gross, mundane and mortal world of material sense objects, but it won't listen. It forces the creature to turn to the world for seeking instant gratification, unbothered about the negative consequences this attitude will have for the creature concerned.]

[Tulsidas says that his mind has a similar tendency and fate like the woman and the stray greedy dog. It repeatedly entangles itself in the sensual pleasures of the world, and gets beaten, hurt, rebuffed and frustrated as a result. But it cares not!]

I have become tired trying out various means and tacts to make the mind disciplined, but I have failed to tame it as it is very headstrong and adamant, and it seems that it is almost invincible for me (haum haraiō kari jatana bibidha bidhi atisai prabala ajai).

Oh Tulsidas! Realise this truth: that it can be controlled only when Lord Sri Ram, who inspires the Mana, decides to put a leash on it (tulasidāsa basa hō'i tabahim jaba prēraka prabhu barajai)³ (4).

[³The message is clear: if a person wishes to control the wayward nature of his Mana and find spiritual rest, peace and happiness, then the easiest means is to turn to Lord Ram, the incarnate Lord God, as the Lord is the only Authority who can subdue the Mana. What Tulsidas implies is to have devotion and affection for Lord Ram and surrender one's self to him, for then the dynamic energy of the Atma, which is 'pure consciousness', would be channelled in this direction, and away from the world of delusions.]

The Stupidity of the Mana

(90)

ऐसी मूढ़ता या मनकी ।
 परिहिरि राम-भगति-सुरसरिता, आस करत ओसकनकी ।।1।।
 धूम-समूह निरखि चातक ज्यों, तृषित जानि मति घनकी ।
 नहिं तहँ सीतलता न बारि, पुनि हानि होति लोचनकी ।।2।।
 ज्यों गच-काँच बिलोकि सेन जड़ छाँह आपने तनकी ।
 टूटत अति आतुर अहार बस, छति बिसारि आननकी ।।3।।
 कहँ लौं कहौं कुचाल कृपानिधि! जानत हौ गति जनकी ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु हरहु दुसह दुख, करहु लाज निज पनकी ।।4।।

(90)

aisī mūrhatā yā manakī.

parihiri rāma-bhagati-surasaritā, āsa karata ōsakanakī. 1.

dhūma-samūha nirakhi cātaka jyōm, trṣita jāni mati ghanakī.

nahim̐ taham̐ sītalatā na bāri, puni hāni hōti lōcanakī. 2.

jyōm gaca-kām̐ca bilōki sēna jaṛa chām̐ha āpanē tanakī.

ṭūṭata ati ātura ahāra basa, chati bisāri ānanakī. 3.

kaham̐ laum̐ kahauṁ kucāla kṛpānidhi! jānata hau gati janakī.

tulasidāsa prabhu harahu dusaha dukha, karahu lāja nija panakī. 4.

Verse no. 90—This Mana (mind) is so stubborn, foolish and ignorant (aisī mūrhatā yā manakī) that it tries to quench its thirst by the dew-drops while abandoning the river Ganges in the form of Lord Sri Ram's devotion and affection (parihiri rāma-bhagati-surasaritā, āsa karata ōsakanakī)¹ (1).

[¹To wit, the Mana is like a stupid person who forsakes an immense source of water in the river to quench his thirst, and instead tries to be satisfied with a miniscule source of water in the drop of a dew. The Mana tries to derive comfort and happiness from this world in spite of being told repeatedly that this is only a delusion, and that whatever comfort and happiness it seems to get from the world and by appeasing the sense organs of the body are not only transient and unreal but also miniscule in comparison to the vast source of bliss and happiness that it can have access to by turning away from the temptations of the materialistic world and urges of the sense organs of the body, and instead diverting its attention to an endless source of these virtues in the form of the having devotion and affection for Lord God, and also by developing a sense of self-realisation that would untap the reservoir of endless spiritual bliss, beatitude and felicity for it.]

[Tulsidas now cites an example of the delusion that the Mana faces.]

A thirsty Papiha (sparrow hawk) goes towards a bank of smoke in search of moisture to quench its thirst, thinking this smoke to be a moisture-laden cloud (dhūma-samūha nirakhi cātaka jyōm, trṣita jāni mati ghanakī), but it neither gets cooled nor finds water in it. Instead, it gets its eyes blinded by the smoke (nahim̐ taham̐ sītalatā na bāri, puni hāni hōti lōcanakī). [Forsooth, the mind has a similar tendency and fate.]² (2).

[²The bird known as 'Papiha' thinks that the dark smoke rising up in the sky from a fire is actually a rain-bearing cloud that is rich in moisture. So it goes towards the smoke in the hope of wetting its tongue and cooling its body temperature. But what happens? It gets blinded by the smoke and heated by the hot environment.

The situation with the Mana is the same. In its delusions, the Mana goes towards the world seeking pleasure, comfort, joy and happiness, but it gets suffering and pain instead.]

[This stanza gives another example, that of a falcon.]

A foolish and hungry falcon sees its own image on a glass floor, and thinking it to be another bird (jyōm gaca-kām̐ca bilōki sēna jaṛa chām̐ha āpanē tanakī), it dives against the glass floor in an attempt to catch its prey and kill it for food as it is

so hungry. But what happens in reality? The foolish falcon breaks its beaks and gravely hurts its own self! (tūṭata ati ātura ahāra basa, chati bisāri ānanakī)³ (3).

[³The falcon does not understand that the bird it sees in the glass floor is its own reflection. It thinks that it is another bird, and it swoops down speedily on the image on the floor in the hope of grabbing its prey for food. But it breaks its beak and bleeds its own mouth.

In a similar fashion, the mind also pounces on the illusionary pleasures of the sense objects in this world, thinking erroneously that the latter would give it its desired happiness and joy. But the reality is quite the contrary. The Mana not only suffers and becomes disillusioned itself, but it also forces the creature to lose its peace and happiness by becoming indulgent in this world, because this creature has allowed himself to be controlled by the Mana instead of the other way round.]

[Having said this, Tulsidas now addresses his Lord Ram and prays to him thus—]

‘Oh Lord who is a treasury of kindness and mercy (“krpānidhi”)! To what extent can I describe this stupidity, stubbornness, evil behaviour and arrogant nature of my Mana (kaham³ laur³ kahaur³ kucāla)?

You understand the pitiable state of servants (jānata hau gati janakī). [Here, Tulsidas means that he has become a servant of the Mana, and so he is not free to act. So he prays to Lord Ram to help him overcome this bondage and its compulsions.]

So oh Lord, remove the fierce and terrible sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations from which Tulsidas is suffering, and help him overcome his great ordeals which have sapped his energy and virtually crushed his spirits (tulasidāsa prabhu harahu dusaha dukha), and thus prove true your vows of being the protector and benefactor of those who have sought refuge and shelter with you, those who have sought succour and solace in you (karahu lāja nija panakī)⁴ (4).

[⁴Tulsidas represents all living beings when he says this prayer to Lord Ram. He emphasises that he is like a servant of his mind. A servant cannot disobey his master, and if the master won’t pay heed to his advice, no matter how wise and sane this advice is, the servant feels helpless. If the master suffers due to his recklessness and ill nature, the servant has to suffer alongside him, though the servant is not at fault personally. So, Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram that whatever worldly faults and delusions he is subjected to and which make him suffer, are none of his own making, but are caused by his stubborn and ignorant Mana which does not pay heed to him. So, oh Lord, help me, because it is only the Lord who can put the Mana under leash.]

The Dance of the Creature under the influence of Worldly Delusions

(91)

नाचत ही निसि-दिवस मर्यो ।
 तब ही ते न भयो हरि थिर जबतें जिव नाम धर्यो ।।1।।
 बहु बासना बिबिध कंचुकि भूषन लोभादि भर्यो ।
 चर अरु अचर गगन जल थलमें, कौन न स्वाँग कर्यो ।।2।।
 देव-दनुज, मुनि, नाग, मनुज नहिं जाँचत कोउ उबर्यो ।
 मेरो दुसह दरिद्र, दोष, दुख काहू तौ न हर्यो ।।3।।
 थके नयन, पद, पानि, सुमति, बल, संग सकल बिछुर्यो ।

अब रघुनाथ सरन आयो जन, भव-भय बिकल डर्यो ॥४॥
 जेहि गुनतें बस होहु रीझि करि, सो मोहि सब बिसर्यो ।
 तुलसिदास निज भवन-द्वार प्रभु, दजै रहन पर्यो ॥५॥

(91)

nācata hī nisi-divasa maraīō.

taba hī tē na bhayō hari thira jabatēm jiva nāma dharaīō. 1.
 bahu bāsanā bibidha kaṇcuki bhūṣana lōbhādi bharaīō.
 cara aru acara gagana jala thalamēm, kauna na svām̐ga karaīō. 2.
 dēva-danuja, muni, nāga, manuja nahim̐ jām̐cata kō'u ubaraīō.
 mērō dusaha daridra, dōṣa, dukha kāhū tau na haraīō. 3.
 thakē nayana, pada, pāni, sumati, bala, saṅga sakala bichuraīō.
 aba raghunātha sarana āyō jana, bhava-bhaya bikala ḍaraīō. 4.
 jēhi gunatēm basa hōhu rījhi kari, sō mōhi saba bisaraīō.
 tulasidāsa nija bhavana-dvāra prabhu, dajai rahana paraīō. 5.

Verse no. 91—The entire days and nights of my life were spent in dancing (to the tune of this delusory world) (nācata hī nisi-divasa maraīō).

Oh Hari! Ever since you had christened (named) the divine entity, that is originally known as the 'Soul' (which is subtle and pure Consciousness), as an entity that is called a 'creature' (a living being with a gross body known as a 'Jiva'), it has never become stable and has never found either a permanent resting place or peace for itself (taba hī tē na bhayō hari thira jabatēm jiva nāma dharaīō)¹. (1).

[¹Tulsidas addresses the basic cause of all problems by invoking the philosophy of the Upanishads. He says that the primary nature of all living beings is their Atma, which is pure consciousness and also known as the 'soul'. This Atma is the true identity of the creature. But unfortunately, this Atma is invisible and an extremely subtle entity. In order to set the ball of creation rolling, the Supreme Being known as Brahm, who is the 'Param Atma' or the supreme Atma, created the creature's gross body which has visibility like the rest of the tangible world. But this body is dead and lifeless without the Atma which injects 'consciousness' into it. Once this happens, this otherwise lifeless body becomes a 'living being'. But it is the Atma that is at the center of the whole thing. The irony is that the Atma becomes a slave of its own body and its various instruments, one of which is the Mana.

This Mana is like a magistrate and controller of the affairs of the body on behalf of the Atma which is like a Sovereign. Now what happens if the magistrate and controller himself becomes corrupt and indulgent once he gets powers to rule, defying even the advice of his own king or sovereign, usurping authority to become a ruler himself? The kingdom and the state suffer.

This is the state of affairs Tulsidas is hinting at. Once the 'Supreme Atma', the pure conscious and subtle Soul, was made into a 'Jiva-Atma', the living being with a gross body, all its sufferings and delusions started. It is simply the fault of its 'grossness'.

And then what happened? Like a balloon filled with hot air, the Atma began to dance and hop madlessly in its new body!]

In the course of this delusory dance, I had worn various ‘bodices’ (upper garments; “*kañcuki*”) representing ‘Vasnaas’ (lust, infatuation, passion; “*bāsanā*”), different ‘ornaments’ (*bhūṣana*) in the form of greed, avarice, attachments, allurements, enticements etc. (*lōbhādi bharaīō*), and there was no pretension, disguise, deceit, conceit, crookedness, heresy, cunning, falsehood, misdemeanour, baseness, meanness etc. that I did not try with zest and zeal (*kauna na svām̐ga karaīō*) in the animate as well as inanimate world (*cara aru acara*)—in my different births that I took as an inhabitant of the sky, in the water, on the land (*gagana jala thalamēm̐*)² (2).

[²Here Tulsidas says that the Atma assumed myriad forms as a ‘creature’, as a bird of the sky, as an aquatic creature living in water, and as terrestrial creature who moves and lives on land. All these countless forms are like the countless dresses a person wears during the course of his life, discarding old clothes and wearing a new one as time goes by. And in each life, the Atma, i.e. the true ‘self’ of the creature, acted its role according to the form or body it had assumed, or the ‘dress it had worn’.

Like an artist who changes his clothes according to the role he has to play on the stage, the ‘Atma’ changed its body and role during the long journey through this world.]

There was no god, demon, hermit, serpent (lords of subterranean world and reptiles), man etc. in front of whom I had not spread my hands to beg (*dēva-danuja, muni, nāga, manuja nahim̐ jām̐cata kō'u ubaraīō*).

But none of them removed my extreme poverty, huge sins, vices and faults; no one helped me to get rid of or overcome any of my sorrows, agonies, troubles, pains and tribulations (*mērō dusaha daridra, dōṣa, dukha kāhū tau na haraīō*)³ (3).

[³When a person begins to suffer, he seeks succour and help from every possible source anywhere he is told it could be found. Tulsidas alludes to the prevalent practice in society of worshipping so many deities, so many gods and goddesses. People, in their utter ignorance, even start worshipping trees, serpents and demi-gods. Why for? Just to fulfil their shortsighted petty needs; just to get instant relief, albeit this relief is imaginary and delusory.]

My eyes, legs, hands, wisdom and intellect—all have become weary (*thakē nayana, pada, pāni, sumati*); and I have lost strength (*bala*) to cope with anything more.

I have lost contact with all my companions (and am feeling like a lonely and desolate traveller passing through a forest that creates fear in the heart of the sternest of men; “*saṅga sakala bichuraīō*”).

Now, oh Lord Raghunātha (Sri Ram)! Tormented and affrightened as I am by this world, this agitated and scared servant of yours has come to seek refuge and shelter at your feet with the hope that you will not turn him away (*aba raghunātha sarana āyō jana, bhava-bhaya bikala ḍaraīō*) (4).

Oh Lord (*prabhu*)! I have forsaken and forgotten all the about the good virtues that could motivate or inspire you to be pleased and happy with me, for I have none of them (*jēhi gunatēm̐ basa hōhu rījhi kari, sō mōhi saba bisaraīō*).

But now howbeit my Lord, I plead and beseech you to let this Tulsidas lie at your doorstep (*tulasidāsa nija bhavana-dvāra prabhu, dajai rahana paraīō*).

[To wit, though I am worthless and may be a nuisance for you, but still let me humbly stay in one corner of your place, because I do not have any other where to go!] (5).

How Foolish are We!

(92)

माधवजू, मोसम मंद न कोऊ ।
जद्यपि मीन—पतंग हीनमति, मोहि नहिं पूजैं ओऊ ॥1॥
रुचिर रूप—आहार—बस्य उन्ह, पावक लोह न जान्यो ।
देखत बिपति बिषय न तजत हौं, ताते अधिक अयान्यो ॥2॥
महामोह—सरिता अपार महँ, संतत फिरत बह्यो ।
श्रीहरि—चरन—कमल—नौका तजि, फिरि फिरि फेन गह्यो ॥3॥
अस्थि पुरातन छुधित स्वान अति ज्यौं भरि मुख पकरै ।
निज तालूगत रुधिर पान करि, मन संतोष धरै ॥4॥
परम कठिन भव—ब्याल—ग्रसित हौं त्रसित भयो अति भारी ।
चाहत अभय भेक सरनागत, खगपति—नाथ बिसारी ॥5॥
जलचर—बृंद जाल—अंतरगत होत सिमिति इक पासा ।
एकहि एक खात लालच—बस, नहिं देखत निज नासा ॥6॥
मेरे अघ सारद अनेक जुग, गनत पार नहिं पावै ।
तुलसीदास पतित—पावन प्रभु, यह भरोस जिय आवै ॥7॥

(92)

mādhavajū, mōsama manda na kō'ū.
jadyapi mīna-pataṅga hīnamati, mōhi nahim pūjaim ō'ū. 1.
rucira rūpa-āhāra-basya unha, pāvaka lōha na jān'yō.
dēkhata bipati biṣaya na tajata haurṁ, tātē adhika ayān'yō. 2.
mahāmōha-saritā apāra mahamṁ, santata phirata bahyō.
śrīhari-carana-kamala-naukā taji, phiri phiri phēna gahyō. 3.
asthi purātana chudhita svāna ati jyaurṁ bhari mukha pakarai.
nija tālūgata rudhira pāna kari, mana santōṣa dharai. 4.
parama kaṭhina bhava-byāla-grasita haurṁ trasita bhayō ati bhārī.
cāhata abhaya bhēka saranāgata, khagapati-nātha bisārī. 5.
jalacara-brṇda jāla-antaragata hōta simiṭi ika pāsā.
ēkahi ēka khāta lālaca-basa, nahim dēkhata nija nāsā. 6.
mērē agha sārada anēka juga, ganata pāra nahim pāvai.
tulasīdāsa patita-pāvana prabhu, yaha bharōsa jiya āvai. 7.

Verse no. 92—Oh respected Lord Mādhavajū (which is one of the many names of Lord Vishnu)! There is no one more lowly, fallen and dumb-witted than me (mōsama manda na kō'ū).

Though (jadyapi) a fish and a moth are of very low intellect (in fact, they do not have any intelligence at all as compared to a human being; “mīna-pataṅga hīnamati”), still even they cannot compare themselves with me (i.e. with my ignorance and stupidity—“ mōhi nahim pūjaim ō'ū”). [Why? This is explained below.] (1).

The ‘moth’ (pataṅga) was so attracted by the beauty of the light of the lamp (rucira rūpa) that it did not realise (na jān'yō) that it was fire (pāvaka) that would burn it if it goes too near to it, and neither did the ‘fish’ (mīna) treat the iron hook (lōha) as a death-trap laid out for it because it was only concerned with the food (the bait) attached to this hook, and got caught in its overwhelming greed for this food (āhāra-basya unha).

But the irony is that I do not abandon pursuing the sensual pleasures of this world inspite of knowing fully well that they are an embodiment or a personified form of all troubles, tribulations and agonies for me (dēkhata bipati biṣaya na tajata hauṁ).

Therefore, I am certainly more stupid and a bigger idiot than the moth and the fish (tātē adhika ayān'yō).

[These two poor creatures do not have the intellect ability and wisdom to determining that the fire and the bait are harmful for them respectively. But I am a human being, a creature who is supposed to be the most evolved in the hierarchy of creation. It is so unfortunate that inspite of having the privilege of possessing intelligence and wisdom, of being able to determine what is good or bad for me and my interest, I still do stupid things that undermine my good and welfare. In this scenario, I am a bigger idiot as compared to the moth and the fish because I allow myself to fall into a trap inspite of knowing that it is a trap!] (2).

I keep constantly floating aimlessly along the great river of swift currents symbolising delusions, attachments and ignorance (mahāmōha-sarītā apāra maham̐, santata phirata bahyō).

Instead of boarding a boat symbolised by surrendering myself at the holy feet of Lord Hari (Lord Ram) in order to cross over this fearful river (śrīhari-carana-kamala-naukā taji), I repeatedly try to swim across it on my own strength by clinging to its foaming currents (which keep me swirling and whirling in the river, without letting me see land on the other side) (phiri phiri phēna gahyō)¹.

[¹To wit, I repeatedly try to grapple with foam, scum or froth emanating from this river (i.e. I indulge in transient and false pleasures of this world which would lead me no where) in the mistaken belief that I will cross over this river on my own strength.

Here, the world is compared to the river that is in spate with swift currents. A man who wishes to cross it is wise if he takes a sturdy and reliable boat across it, but what will you call a man who tries to swim across it to impress onlookers about his abilities? Won't one call him utterly stupid and out of his wits?

So Tulsidas says that the easiest and the safest way to cross over from this world of delusions and torments, a world that never gives peace and happiness to the creature's soul but traps him instead in an endless cycle of miseries and grief, is to take refuge in the holy feet of Lord God, i.e. Lord Ram.] (3).

[Tulsidas cites the example of a hungry dog chewing a dry piece of bone, thinking that the blood that oozes out of its own injured jaws is coming out from that bone!]

A hungry dog, in its ignorance, grabs a piece of old and dry bone, nibbles and gnaws at it and chews it as if it was covered by fresh flesh (asthi purātana chudhita svāna ati jyaum̐ bhari mukha pakarai), and thinks that the blood oozing out of its

own gums is actually coming from the bone (nija tālūgata rudhira pāna kari). And so it continues to enjoy and feels contented in its mind and heart by chewing the dry piece of bone, mindless of the injury it is causing to its own mouth and jaws (mana santōṣa dharai). [A similar case prevails with me.]² (4).

[²The world has no reality in it; it has no pith, juice, succulence and any worthwhile substance in it. It is raw and dry like this bone. When I indulge in it, I think that it is giving me pleasure and happiness. But actually I am suffering, albeit I don't realise it. This failure to understand the truth is at my own peril.]

I am becoming extremely terrified and am constantly tormented by the fear of getting bitten by the poisonous and ferocious serpent symbolising this mudane world of transmigration and consisting of countless delusions and temptations of sense objects that cause interminable sorrows and grief for the creature, claspings it in their vice-like grip from which it becomes impossible to extricate one's self (parama kaṭhina bhava-byāla-grasita hauṁ trasita bhayō ati bhārī).

But, the irony is, I am such a great fool that I try to find succour and protection from it by seeking the refuge (or patronage) of the frog (symbolising the enticing pleasures of the materialistic world), instead of taking refuge at the holy feet of the Lord who rides on the legendary bird known as 'Garud' (cāhata abhaya bhēka saranāgata, khagapati-nātha bisārī)³ (5).

[³Here, Tulsidas is referring to Lord Vishnu because the Lord has Garud, the celestial Eagle, as his vehicle. The 'Garud' is famed as an enemy of the serpent for he gobbles up the latter very easily. He is invoked whenever one needs protection from troubles created by this reptile.

The frog croaks loudly when it is the mating season, usually during the rains when it tries to attract the female for copulation. It is compared to the sensual pleasures of the world because they too beckon the creature by their brilliant and alluring temptations, symbolising the frog's croaking during the rainy season when the surroundings are green, fragrant, colourful and sensual.

A snake is hiding behind this frog and bidding its time to lunge forward and grab the latter in its mouth.

A man falls into this trap. He pursues the temptations of the world like a frog croaking merrily, unaware that a snake representing the various torments and miseries associated with this gross world is eying him stealthily. And then the man unwittingly gets bitten by the serpent, symbolising the miseries associated with attachment with the material things of the world. In his delirium this bitten man forgets to invoke Garud to get rid of the burning created by snake bite. In other words, even though the man is suffering immensely, he does not, under the influence of the delusions created by this world, invoke the Lord's grace and mercy to get rid of his torments. On the contrary, he goes on pursuing this world in the hope of finding some remedy that would calm down his agitated nerves and give succour and peace to him, which howbeit eludes him.]

Hordes of aquatic creatures of varying denominations get trapped in a net (cast in the water by the fisherman) (jalacara-br̥nda jāla-antaragata hōta). Once they are crowded together in a small net (simiṭi ika pāsā), they start fighting with each other, the larger ones devouring their smaller compatriots (ēkahi ēka khāta lālaca-basa),

without realising the consequences that one by one they would all be decimated (nahim dēkhata nija nāsā). [Verily indeed, my condition is almost identical.]⁴ (6).

[⁴Tulsidas alludes to the way people have become selfish, with one human being baying for the blood of his brethren in a stiff competition to get the best things of the world all for himself. In this quarrelsome, pushing and shoving world, a person does not realise that unfettered greed and avarice and jealousy is making him enemy of all. No one is left to guide others towards a path that would truly give them peace and happiness, for everyone wants to extract some selfish interest from others.]

If goddess Saraswati (the patron goddess of knowledge) keeps on counting my sins, misdemeanours and misdeeds for many ages (mērē agha sārada anēka juga), she would still not find an end to it (ganata pāra nahim pāvai).

The only reliance that Tulsidas has is in the form of his firm conviction and faith (tulasīdāsa -- yaha bharōsa jiya āvai) that his Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who makes the lowly and the fallen persons into ones who are respected, purified from their sins and freed from their faults (patita-pāvana prabhu). [Therefore I am sure that he will also accept me and provide me with succour and refuge.] (7).

Lord Rāma's merciful nature

(93)

कृपा सो धौँ कहाँ बिसारी राम ।
 जेहि करुना सुनि श्रवन दीन-दुख, धावत हौ तजि धाम ॥1॥
 नागराज निज बल बिचारि हिय, हारि चरन चित दीन्हों ।
 आरत गिरा सुनत खगपति तजि, चलत बिलंब न कीन्हों ॥2॥
 दितिसुत-त्रास-त्रसित निसिदिन प्रह्लाद-प्रतिग्या राखी ।
 अतुलित बल मृगराज-मनुज-तनु दनुज हत्यो श्रुति साखी ॥3॥
 भूप-सदसि सब नृप बिलोकि प्रभु, राखु कह्यो नर-नारी ।
 बसन पूरि, अरि-दरप दूरि करि, भूरि कृपा दनुजारी ॥4॥
 एक एक रिपुते त्रसित जन, तुम राखे रघुबीर ।
 अब मोहिं देत दुसह दुख बहु रिपु कस न हरहु भव-पीर ॥5॥
 लोभ-ग्राह, दनुजेस-क्रोध कुरुराज-बंधु खल मार ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु यह दारुन दुख भंजहु राम उदार ॥6॥

(93)

krpā sō dhauṁ kahām̐ bisārī rāma.
 jēhi karunā suni śravana dīna-dukha, dhāvata hau taji dhāma. 1.
 nāgarāja nija bala bicāri hiya, hāri carana cita dīnhōm.
 ārata girā sunata khagapati taji, calata bilamba na kīnhōm. 2.
 ditisuta-trāsa-trasita nisidina prahalāda-pratigyā rākhī.
 atulita bala mṛgarāja-manuja-tanu danuja hatyō śruti sākhī. 3.
 bhūpa-sadasi saba nṛpa bilōki prabhu, rākhū kahyō nara-nārī.

basana pūri, ari-darapa dūri kari, bhūri kṛpā danujārī. 4.
 ēka ēka riputē trasita jana, tuma rākhē raghubīra.
 aba mōhirṁ dēta dusaha dukha bahu ripu kasa na harahu bhava-pīra. 5.
 lōbha-grāha, danujēsa-krōdha kururāja-bandhu khala māra.
 tulasidāsa prabhuā yaha dārūna dukha bhanjahu rāma udāra. 6.

Verse no. 93—[In this verse, Tulsidas invokes Lord Ram’s merciful and compassionate nature, citing several instances when the Lord had rushed to help his devotees who called out to him in distress, to plead with him to pay heed to his (Tulsidas’) prayers.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram! Why have you forgotten that merciful, compassionate, kind, benevolent, beneficent and gracious nature of yours (kṛpā sō dhauṁ kahāṁ bisārī rāma) by virtue of which you rush out of your place and go immediately (dhāvata hau taji dhāma) to help those who are in distress when you hear the pitiable cries of the wretched, the humble, the weak, the meek, the deprived and the downtrodden creatures (jēhi karunā suni śravana dīna-dukha)? (1).

When the king of elephants (known by the name of ‘Gajendra’)¹ felt that his strength was failing and he had no chance of escaping death (nāgarāja nija bala bicāri hiya), when he felt utterly dejected, defeated, helpless and hapless, he decided to focus his attention exclusively on the holy feet of the Lord as his last resort (hāri carana cita dīnhōm), making a fervent appeal to you for protection and liberation from his horrors (of being dragged into the water and getting killed by the crocodile that had clasped its legs firmly in its jaws).

Upon hearing his call of distress, you had instantly jumped-off your mount Garuda (because it was too slow to reach the site on time) (ārata girā sunata khagapati taji), and had dashed to the site of the call without delay (calata bilamba na kīnhōm) (2).

You had kept the honour and the word of Prahalad (prahalāda-pratigyā rākhī)², who was constantly under threat of life and was being tormented night and day by his father, the demon named Hiranyakashipu who was the son of Diti, the mother of all the demons (ditisuta-trāsa-trasita nisidina), by assuming a fierce, strong and formidable form of a ‘half lion and half man’ (known as ‘Narsingh’) (atulita bala mrgarāja-manuja-tanu). In this way you had slayed the demon and protected Prahalad (who was your devotee, and his father subjected him to horrors because his son would not abandon his faith in you and stop worshipping you) (danuja hatyō).

Forsooth, the Vedas stand witness to it (i.e. this incident is cited even in the ancient scriptures, and there is no denying it) (śruti sākhi) (3).

When Draupadi, the wife of Arjun who is believed to be an incarnation of ‘Nar’ (the cosmic Male—“nara-nārī”), was being disrobed in the full court (of Duryodhan, one of the cousins of Arjun and belonging to the Kaurav clan), and when none of the assembled kings came to her rescue when she was about to lose her modesty and self-respect though she pleaded with everyone (bhūpa-sadasi saba nṛpa bilōki prabhu), she cried out to you (Lord Krishna) with the greatest of urgency and gravest of distress in her plea for mercy, ‘Oh Lord! Protect me (rākhū kahyō nara-nārī)!’

Then, oh the enemy of demons (*danujārī*), you had shown exceptional and abundant mercy and compassion towards her (*bhūri kṛpā*) by creating a huge and endless mound of seamless cloth (*basana pūri*) to protect her dignity, modesty and chastity. This kind and merciful act of yours had eliminated all the pride, haughtiness, arrogance and pretensions of righteousness of her tormentors (*ari-darapa dūri kari*)³ (4).

Oh Raghbir (i.e. the brave Lord of king Raghu's race; Lord Sri Ram)! You had protected all these (above named) devotees and many others from being subjected to torments from a single enemy in each case (*ēka ēka riputē trasita jana, tuma rākhē raghubīra*).

But here, in my case, there are numerous such enemies who are inflicting unbearable agonies, pains and miseries upon me (*aba mōhim dēta dusaha dukha bahu ripu*). Why don't you remove this pain and torment of mine which is caused due to mundane existence in this delusory world (*kasa na harahu bhava-pīra*)?⁴ (5).

[⁴Here, Tulsidas has made it clear the sort of enemies he has. A summary of Tulsidas' sufferings from which he wants Lord Ram to give him relief are enumerated in verse nos. 81—92 herein above, as well as in stanza no. 6 of this verse below. It ought to be noted here that these 'enemies' are only symbolic of the countless spiritual problem and hurdles all the living beings face as a whole in this world. Once the enemy is determined, Tulsidas then prescribes the way a person can get rid of these problems. And the way he advises is to seek the protection of, have devotion for, and surrender to Lord Ram, the personified form of the Supreme Being, the Lord God of the world.]

The crocodile-like greed, avarice and rapacity (*lōbha-grāha*), the anger-like demon king Hiranyakashipu (*danujēsa-krōdha*), and the wicked Kamdeo-like (*khala māra*) brother of the king of the Kuru clan (a reference to Duryodhan's brother Dushashan who had tried to disrobe Draupadi; "*kururāja-bandhu*")⁵—all these are giving this humble and helpless Tulsidas an immense amount of unbearable and interminable trouble, suffering, pain, grief and horror that continuously torment him (*yaha dārūna dukha*).

Oh gracious, benevolent and magnanimous Lord Sri Ram (*rāma udāra*)! Please have mercy on me and destroy my fierce sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations (by your intervention) (*tulasidāsa prabhuā bhañjahu yaha dārūna dukha*) (6).

[⁵As is clear in this stanza, the 'crocodile' (*grāha*), the 'demon king Hiranyakashipu' (*danujēsa*) and 'the brother of the king of the Kuru clan, i.e. Dushashan' (*kururāja-bandhu*) are metaphors for the various negative qualities that trouble a person in this world. These are greed, avarice and rapacity (*lōbha*), anger (*krōdha*), and lust and passion (*māra*) respectively.

Tulsidas prays to his Lord Ram to provide protection against these formidable enemies who are constantly troubling him.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.

¹The story of 'Gaja', the king of elephants, and how he was on the verge of death when he pleaded to Lord Vishnu to save him, at which the Lord came immediately

and killed his tormentor, the crocodile, is narrated in verse no. 57 of this book Vinai Patrika. Refer also to verse no. 213, stanza no. 2, and verse no. 217, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika.

²Prahalad and his demon father Hiranyakashipu: The demon king Hiranyakashipu propitiated Brahma and took a peculiar boon that he would not die either at the hands of a human or by an animal, neither in the day nor at night, nor by any arms or armaments, or inside or outside the house. As a result, he became excessively tyrannical, haughty and cruel. He doggedly started persecuting the Lord's devotees. His son was called Prahalad. The child was a great devotee of the Lord since his birth, and inspite of his father's strict strictures, he wouldn't abandon his love for the Lord. The demon tried all possible means to make the child heed him, but at last, appalled and most indignant at his religious beliefs and devotion for Lord Vishnu, he once tied the child to a pillar and drew a sword to kill him. He challenged the child, saying, 'Show me your Lord, or else I will kill you instantly'. Prahalad replied, 'The Lord is everywhere—even in this pillar'. Rebuked, the demon rased his sword to strike at Prahalad, but the Lord manifested himself immediately from the pillar by splitting it into two parts, as 'Narsingh' (half man-half lion) and dragged the demon to the doorway, lay him prostrate across his laps and tore his entrails out, thereby keeping the sanctity of all the conditions of the boon as described above. At the same time, he protected the devotee Prahalad by killing his own father who was tormenting him.

The story of Prahalad is narrated in detail in (i) Vishnu Puran, 1/17-20, and (ii) Bhagvata Puran, Skandha 7, Cantos 3-10.

³"Nara-nārī": This two-word combination literally means the wife ("nārī") of a man ("Nara"). Arjun was regarded as an incarnation of 'Nar' aspect of the Lord, or according to some legends, of a sage called Nar; hence, draupadi, being the wife of Arjun, was called Nar-Naari (i.e., wife of Nar). The legend goes that Duryodhan (of Kaurav clan) cheated the five Pandava brothers in a game of dice and won—even to the extent of their wife Draupadi. In order to humiliate them further, Duryodhan ordered Dushashan to pull her in the royal court and disrobe her. The latter started pulling her Sari to unclothe her, at which the poor lady—having lost all hopes of protecting her modesty and self-dignity when all those present did not object to such an abhorable and dishonourable act—called out to Lord Kirshna in utter distress and as a last hope and resort. The Lord manifested as seamless cloth; Dushashan got tired at pulling and pulling, but could not disrobe the hapless woman. This episode is famous in Mahabharat and was one of the main reasons that ignited this epic war.

This incident where Lord Hari protected the modesty and dignity of Draupadi by manifesting himself as a huge mound of seamless cloth is also mentioned elsewhere in Vinai Patrika, for instance in verse no. 206, stanza no. 3; verse no. 213, stanza no. 3; verse no. 217, stanza no. 3.]

Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma

(94)

काहे ते हरि मोहिं बिसारो ।
जानत निज महिमा मेरे अघ, तदपि न नाथ सँभारो ॥१॥
पतित—पुनीत, दीनहित, असरन—सरन कहत श्रुति चारो ।

हौं नहिं अधम, समीत, दीन? किधौं बेदन मृषा पुकारो? ।।2।।
 खग—गनिका—गज—ब्याध—पाँति जहँ, तहँ हौँहूँ बैठारो ।
 अब केहि लाज कृपानिधान! परसत पनवारो फारो ।।3।।
 जो कलिकाल प्रबल अति होतो, तुव निदेस तैं न्यारो ।
 तौ हरि रोष भरोस दोष गुन तेहि भजते तजि गारो ।।4।।
 मसक बिरंचि, बिरंचि मसक सम, करहु प्रभाउ तुम्हारो ।
 यह सामरथ अछत मोहिं त्यागहु, नाथ तहाँ कछु चारो ।।5।।
 नाहिन नरक परत मोकहँ डर, जद्यपि हौं अति हारो ।
 यह बड़ि त्रास दासतुलसी प्रभु, नामहु पाप न जारो ।।6।।

(94)

kāhē tē hari mōhim bisārō.

jānata nija mahimā mērē agha, tadapi na nātha sam̐bhārō. 1.
 patita-punīta, dīnahita, asarana-sarana kahata śruti cārō.
 haur̐ nahim̐ adhama, sabhīta, dīna? kidhaur̐ bēdana mṛṣā pukārō?. 2.
 khaga-ganikā-gaja-byādha-pām̐ti jaham̐, taham̐ haunhūm̐ baiṭhārō.
 aba kēhi lāja kṛpānidhāna! parasata panavārō phārō. 3.
 jō kalikāla prabala ati hōtō, tuva nidēsa tēm̐ n'yārō.
 tau hari rōṣa bharōsa dōṣa guna tēhi bhajatē taji gārō. 4.
 masaka biran̐ci, biran̐ci masaka sama, karahu prabhā'u tumhārō.
 yaha sām̐ratha achata mōhim̐ tyāgahu, nātha taham̐ kachu cārō. 5.
 nāhina naraka parata mōkaham̐ ḍara, jadyapi haur̐ ati hārō.
 yaha baḍi trāsa dāsatalasī prabhu, nāmahu pāpa na jārō. 6.

Verse no. 94—Oh Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram, who was an incarnation of Lord Hari, one of the many names of Lord Vishnu)! Why have you forgotten me (kāhē tē hari mōhim bisārō)?

Oh Lord! You are aware of your own reputation, fame and glory on the one hand, and of my sins and misdemeanours on the other hand (jānata nija mahimā mērē agha). In spite of that, why don't you take care of me (tadapi na nātha sam̐bhārō)?¹ (1).

[¹The Lord has a reputation of being merciful and of taking care of even the most sinful and humble of creatures if the latter honestly prays to the Lord, seeking the Lord's protection while promising to change his evil ways. Not only this, the Lord is so gracious that if someone takes his shelter, the Lord ensures that the person changes his evil nature on his own by subtly influencing his mind and heart.

In this stanza, Tulsidas invokes this quality of Lord Ram and stresses that the Lord should be careful about acting in accordance with his famed reputation and his own words that he would afford protection to the most lowly and humble, the most sinful and wretched, if the latter prays to him and surrenders himself before the Lord. Otherwise, his immaculate reputation would be tarnished if he neglects Tulsidas and does not give solace and succour to him.

In the following stanzas, the stellar virtues and glories of Lord Ram which have made him so famous in this creation are enumerated in brief.]

Oh Lord, you are the one who purifies those who are tainted, those who are sinful, evil, vile and wicked; you make those who have countless faultless into ones who are faultless (*patita-punīta*).

You are a benevolent benefactor and a selfless well-wisher of those who are unfortunate, distressed, lowly and humble; you think and act in their interest (*dīnahita*).

You provide refuge and shelter to them who have no refuge or shelter anywhere else (*asarana-sarana*).

These are facts that are affirmed by all the four Vedas (*kahata śruti cārō*). Then tell me, if this is the case, am I not eligible for your attention and mercy; am I not distressed, downtrodden, scared and sinful enough that I do not deserve your kindness and grace (for my salvation and deliverance)? (*haum̐ nahim̐ adhama, sabhīta, dīna?*).

Or else, is the assertion of the Vedas wrong; is their proclamation erroneous (*kidhaum̐ bēdana mṛṣā pukārō*)? (2).

To start with, you had me sit along with the bird (vulture Jatau), Ganika¹ (the prostitute who attained salvation), the elephant (Gaja) and the hunter/bandit (named Valmiki)².

[To wit, you have acknowledged that I am a sinner like one of them; you have equated me or treated me at par with them: “*khaga-ganikā-gaja-byādha-pām̐ti jaham̐, taham̐ haunhūm̐ baiṭhārō*”.]

Now, oh merciful Lord, what hesitation or shame do you now have in providing me with the same benefit, the same mercy and grace that you bestowed upon them (*aba kēhi lāja kṛpānidhāna*)³?

[¹Ganika (The prostitute): There was a prostitute by the name of Pingla. One day she had decorated herself with flowers and ornaments and waited eagerly for her lover. When he did not turn up even till midnight, she was very contrite and it dawned upon her that if she had spent so much of her time in devotion and remembrance of the Lord, she would have found deliverance. Right onwards, she turned away from her profession and became an ardent devotee of the Lord. This led to her emancipation and salvation.

²The story of Jatau, Gaja and Valmiki are narrated in notes appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this book *Vinai Patrika*.

³To wit, first you accepted that you had provided the benefit of liberation, deliverance, peace and happiness to the above named entities who everyone knows were sinful, evil and lowly. Then you had also accepted that Tulsidas was no better than them—i.e. you treated Tulsidas at par with these sinful fellows. Now, if you can grant your mercy and grace upon these creatures on the ground that it is your very nature to provide succour and solace to those who are distressed and lowly, as well as to purify the impure and the sinful, then tell me oh Lord why are you not being equally graceful and merciful to Tulsidas? Verily oh Lord, I also expect the same treatment at your hands.]

Now therefore, once you have allowed me to sit alongside the above-named persons, why are you taking away the platter (i.e. the plate of leaves for partaking food in a community meal) put in front of me (*parasata panavārō phārō*)⁴?

[⁴Here, Tulsidas refers to the tradition of great Kings of inviting the poor and the humble for a community meal. In this metaphor, the benevolence, grace and spiritual rewards that the Lord bestowed upon the vulture Jatau, the prostitute Ganika, the elephant Gaja, and the hunter-turned great sage Valmiki is likened to the

wonderful and delicious food served to them in this community meal. These creatures had never expected in their lives to ever taste the sweetness of freedom from a life of sins and vices which was like their daily staple food, but on this occasion they tasted the most delicious food of their lives, symbolised by the nectar-like sweetness that is inherent in attainment of spiritual bliss and deliverance from the horrors of this world.

Tulsidas says that he is no less sinful and lowly than them. And therefore, why is Lord Ram not granting him the same benefit as he had granted these four persons mentioned in this verse? Tulsidas reminds his Lord Ram that if he neglects the former, then it will have a negative effect on the Lord's well known reputation of providing freedom from fear, freedom from sins and freedom from miseries to those who have sought refuge with the Lord even though they had been sinful and evil prior to seeking such refuge.

To wit, Tulsidas earnestly pleads with his beloved Lord Ram, saying: "Oh Lord, why are you depriving me of the benefit of having peace and happiness, of having liberation and deliverance from all worldly horrors and miseries, like you had provided these to the sinful and pervert fellows named by me? Am I worse than them, or am I not as sinful and evil as they were? If they qualified for receiving your mercy, why am I not equally qualified?" (3).

If Kaliyug (the personified form of the present age, the 'yuga', named after 'Kali', the deity of this age) had been stronger, more potent and powerful, and more gracious than you are (*jō kalikāla prabala ati hōtō*), and had he not been obeying your orders, had he not been under your command and was independent (*tuva nidēsa tēm n'yārō*)—then oh Hari (*tau hari*), we would have not troubled you, we would not have relied upon you for succour and solace, we would have stopped praising your fame and glories, and would have stopped getting angry at Kaliyug and finding faults with it (*rōṣa bharōsa dōṣa guna*).

Instead of you, we would have worshipped and adored Kaliyug because it would have served our purpose. We would not have been angry at him or blame him for all the faults that afflict the world and cause interminable misery and pain to all living beings in it, because in spite of all its shortcomings and faults it would have been our Lord and Master for all practical purposes (*rōṣa bharōsa dōṣa guna tēhi bhajatē taji gārō*)⁵.

[⁵To wit, if Kaliyug is more powerful than Lord Ram, then Kaliyug would be the de-facto Lord of the world instead Sri Ram. In this situation, it would be prudent to keep him in good humour in spite of all his shortcomings—because it is always advisable to keep the King, in whose realm one has to live, in good humour. Otherwise, unnecessary problems are created by criticising the King and inviting his wrath.

In this stanza Tulsidas politely and lovingly warns his Lord Ram that if he starts neglecting his devotees like Tulsidas, then they will think that Kali, the presiding deity of the current corrupt age, is more powerful. No one would then like to offend Kali and invite his wrath. They will stop worshipping the Lord and praying to him for their deliverance from miseries, and instead try to propitiate Kali. The Lord must understand that it will be a very shameful development, and would undermine his divinity and supremacy in this creation. Therefore, the Lord should pay heed to Tulsidas and take special care of the sinful and lowly creatures during the era known as Kaliyug if the Lord wishes to retain his glory and fame in this world.] (4).

But (what I have said above is not true because oh Lord) we all know about your majestic glories and mystical capabilities (*karahu prabhā'u tumhārō*) for you are capable of transforming a humble mosquito into the most exalted Brahma, the Creator, and vice-versa (*masaka birañci, birañci masaka sama*)⁶.

[⁶Albeit I have said that if you become slightly careless, the people of the world would think that you are afraid of taking action against Kaliyug or providing help to those whom Kaliyug wishes to enslave, as this would annoy the latter, and you do not wish to annoy him; but it is just for the sake of warning you, for actually all of us know that you are extremely powerful, being the sole Lord and the supreme Authority of creation. Even Kaliyug obeys your commands. We know for sure that you have that power whereby you can elevate the humblest to the stature of the most exalted, symbolised by your ability to turn a humble mosquito into the Creator of this creation!]

Inspite of being so great, able, potent and powerful Lord of the world, (it seems that) are you abandoning, ignoring and neglecting me (*yaha sāmāratha achata mōhim tyāgahu*).

Then, oh Lord, if even you behave this way, what can I do for I am feeling helpless (as I have no one to turn to and complain against you) (*nātha tahām' kachu cārō*). [But truly Lord, this does not behove of you and your majestic glory!] (5).

Though I have been defeated (“*jadyapi haum' ati hārō*”—i.e. have lost all hopes of salvation and deliverance), and have recoiled to my fate of falling into hell and have therefore overcome this fear too (*nāhina naraka parata mōkaham' ḍara*)—but oh Lord (*prabhu*), this Tulsidas has the greatest regret and is feeling most anguished, hurt and sorrowful (*yaha baḍi trāsa dāsatulasī*) that even your great and powerful Name could not burn to ashes my sins, faults and blemishes which prevent me from attaining salvation and eternal peace for myself (*nāmahu pāpa na jārō*), though it certainly and surely can do so! (6).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Tulasīdās' Humility

(95)

तऊ न मेरे अघ—अवगुन गनिहैं ।
 जौ जमराज काज सब परिहरि, इहै ख्याल उर अनिहैं ॥१॥
 चलिहैं छूटि पुंज पापिनके, असमंजस जिय जनिहैं ।
 देखि खलल अधिकार प्रभूसों (मेरी) भूरि भलाई भनिहैं ॥२॥
 हँसि करिहैं परतीति भगतकी, भगत—सिरोमनि मनिहैं ।
 ज्यों त्यों तुलसिदास कोसलपति अपनायेहि पर बनिहैं ॥३॥

(95)

ta'ū na mērē agha-avaguna ganihairm.
 jau jamarāja kāja saba parihari, ihai khyāla ura anihairm. 1.
 calihairm chūṭi punṇa pāpinakē, asamanṇasa jiya janihairm.
 dēkhi khalala adhikāra prabhūsōm (mērī) bhūri bhalāṭ bhanihairm. 2.
 hamṣi karihairm paratīti bhagatakī, bhagata-sirōmani manihairm.
 jyōm tyōm tulasidāsa kōsalapati apanāyēhi para banihairm. 3.

Verse no. 95—[Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram—] ‘Oh Lord Sri Ram! If Yam (the God of death and hell) leaves aside all other works (of keeping an account for the sins and good deeds of living beings in general) (jau jamarāja kāja saba parihari), and exclusively spends his time on counting my own sins, evils and faults (ihai khyāla ura anihairm -- agha-avaguna), I am sure that he wouldn't be able to finish counting them (i.e. counting of my sins, faults, vices etc., because they are so vast and innumerable that he won't find an end to them) (ta'ū na mērē -- ganihairm). (1).

[And, while he is so engaged in counting my sins and faults, and seeing that his attention is diverted on some other job—] Hordes of sinners and evil mongers would have an opportunity to break free and escape punishment (from hell), and run away unhindered (calihairm chūṭi punṇa pāpinakē). This would cause great worry to Yam, and he would find himself on the horns of a dilemma (asamanṇasa jiya janihairm).

[Why? It is because is his duty to fully count and list all the sins of every individual creature. But in my case this list is so long and my sins so great that the poor Yam would be at his wits end how to count them and judge them on their severity. Finding him so pre-occupied and distracted by this daunting task, countless sinners and evil creatures will find an opportunity to escape his vigilant sight and run away from hell. Flummoxed and flabbergasted, Yam would not know how to tackle me. It is such a hilarious situation, ain't it?]

Realising that he (Yam) would be accused of negligence in carrying out his duties because of me (as he would not be able to pay attention to other sinners in his custody because his attention was fixed on accounting for my sins and misdemeanours, resulting in these sinners, evil and wicked creatures escaping from his custody) (dēkhi khalala adhikāra), he would present a report to you (i.e. to Lord Sri Ram, the Supreme Authority and Sovereign of this creation) praising me greatly (prabhūsōm (mērī) bhūri bhalāṭ bhanihairm), and asserting that I am your great and faithful devotee, that I have not committed any sin, misdemeanour and malfeasance, and that by the good influence of my worshipping and adoring you, even other sinners were freed of their fetters (because of their keeping company with me). This is why all of them managed to escape from his custody.

[Yam will finally abandon counting and enumerating my sins. He has to report to the Supreme Lord, and to his dismay he would find that others prisoners in his custody are running away helter skelter while he was engaged in updating my record. So, in order to save his own skin, he would report to the Lord that this fellow Tulsidas is a great saint and so no fault could be found in his life-record. Well, well! It would be fantastic for me, won't it be so?] (2).

Then you would smilingly accept the words of your devotee (i.e. Yam, who is actually an employee of your royal court and has been assigned the duty of keeping an

account of all living beings so that they can be rewarded or punished according to their deeds—“*hamṣi karihairṁ paratīti bhagatakī*”), and you would regard me as the best among your devotees (*bhagata-sirōmani manihairṁ*).

[When your court employee Yam gives a positive report about me, albeit it is done to escape censor from you for not paying attention to other sinners and allowing these culprits to escape punishment because he was too occupied in updating my sins, you will think that I am actually a great devotee of yours and a holy man; that it is due to the positive effect of my company that other sinners and evil mongers too got redeemed because it is a well known thing that company of saints and holy men can turn the most evil and sinful person into one who is good and honourable. Forsooth, you will think that it is due to my good company that this transformation had taken place with other sinners, and it is because of this that they were all allowed to leave hell and escape punishment by Yam!]

In short, oh the King of Kaushal (“*kōsalapati*”; Lord Ram, the King of Ayodhya), you will have to accept me as one of your own devotees, either in a straightforward manner by heeding to my prayers, or by an indirect manner when someone else (in this case Yam) tells you that I am your devotee and therefore sin-less and worthy (*jyōm tyōm tulasidāsa apanāyēhi para banihairṁ*).

[To wit, since it is certain that you can’t avoid me, and would have to accept me as one of your devotees irrespective of whether I am sinful or not, then why not do it as an answer to my prayers when I am honestly telling you that I am sinful but have come to seek refuge at your holy feet, as I have heard that you have a great reputation of providing shelter to the lowly, the sinful and the bad. At least every thing would be done in a transparent manner, and Yam would not be compelled to tell a lie to escape censor from you, and falsely make me a holy man when I myself am telling you that I am not.

Oh Lord, if you accept me because you are told that I am holy and nice, what greatness is there for you in it? Tell me, which great king would not accept a good person? The magic would be when you accept a sinful person with full knowledge that he is sinful, and then turn him around to be a holy man by your grace and mercy. It is only in the latter case that you will get good fame and applaud from the world as being the Lord who gives shelter and refuge to even those who have no other where to go, and those who have honestly sought your refuge by acknowledging their own sins and misdemeanours, begging you to forgive them and provide them liberation and deliverance.

Say, what greatness or credit will you have if only those who are good and meritorious get these spiritual rewards, because they are destined to get them nevertheless due to the positive effect of their own efforts and deeds, and not by any of your grace and mercy. So therefore, it is in your own interest to accept Tulsidas as he is.] (3).

[Note :- A similar sentiment and cleverness has been displayed by Tulsidas in Verse No. 208.]

जौ पै जिय धरिहौ अवगुन जनके ।
 तौ क्यों कटत सुकृत—नखते मो पै, बिपुल बृंद अघ—बनके ॥1॥
 कहिहै कौन कलुष मेरे कृत, करम बचन अरु मनके ।
 हारहिं अमित सेष सारद श्रुति, गिनत एक—एक छनके ॥2॥
 जो चित चढ़ै नाम—महिमा निज, गुनगन पावन पनके ।
 तो तुलसिहिं तारिहौं बिप्र ज्यों दसन तोरि जमगनके ॥3॥

(96)

jau pai jiya dharihau avaguna janakē.
 tau kyōm kaṭata sukr̥ta-nakhatē mō pai, bipula bṛnda agha-banakē. 1.
 kahihai kauna kaluṣa mērē kṛta, karama bacana aru manakē.
 hārahiṁ amita sēṣa sārada śruti, ginata ēka-ēka chanakē. 2.
 jō cita caṛhai nāma-mahimā nija, gunagana pāvana panakē.
 tō tulasihim tārihauṁ bipra jyōm dasana tōri jamaganakē. 3.

Verse no. 96—Oh Lord! If you pay attention to the faults and misdemeanours of this servant (faithful devotee and a loyal follower) of yours (jau pai jiya dharihau avaguna janakē), then how would I be able to cut through the dense and large forest of sins, evils and vices with my humble nail-like scythe representing my meagre resources symbolised by some good and meritorious deeds that I may have done, or some good virtues and luck that I may have (tau kyōm kaṭata sukr̥ta-nakhatē mō pai, bipula bṛnda agha-banakē).

[Say, how can I get victory over my sins with my limited resources in the form of virtues and meagre good deeds if you don't help me?] (1).

Who can ever describe the innumerable sins committed by me through my mind, speech and body (kahihai kauna kaluṣa mērē kṛta, karama bacana aru manakē)?

Forsooth, even numerous Sesh-Naths (legendary serpent with a thousand tongues), Saraswatis (the goddess of speech) and Vedas (ancient scriptures) would be defeated (fail) in trying to account for all my sins, evils, vices, misdemeanours etc. (hārahiṁ amita sēṣa sārada śruti, ginata ēka-ēka chanakē) (2).

If you happen to recall the grace and glory of your holy Name (and its liberating powers) (jō cita caṛhai nāma-mahimā nija), and the fame of your special nature of purifying and uplifting the downtrodden, deprived, lowly, distressed, the helpless and hapless creatures (gunagana pāvana panakē), then you would certainly liberate this Tulsidas from the ocean of this mundane world by smashing the teeth of the messengers of Yam (God of death and hell) in the same way as you had done for Ajamil (tō tulasihim tārihauṁ bipra jyōm dasana tōri jamaganakē)¹ (3).

[¹To wit, it is impossible for me to get liberation from the bondage and burden of my sins relying solely on the strength of my own virtues and good deeds. You have a great reputation of providing freedom from sins and their horrible consequences to those who have taken shelter with you, who have called out to you in distress to help

them from the horrors of sins by invoking your holy Name. one such instance I can give is that of Ajamil. Then oh Lord, you must also provide liberation and deliverance to this humble servant of yours known as 'Tulsidas'. Refer: Verse no. 57.]

If

(97)

जौ पै हरि जनके औगुन गहते ।
 तौ सुरपति कुरुराज बालिसों, कत हठि बैर बिसहते ॥1॥
 जौ जप जाग जोग ब्रत बरजित, केवल प्रेम न चहते ।
 तौ कत सुर मुनिबर बिहाय ब्रज, गोप-गेह बसि रहते ॥2॥
 जौ जहँ-तहँ प्रन राखि भगतको, भजन-प्रभाउ न कहते ।
 तौ कलि कठिन करम-मारग जड़ हम केहि भँति निबहते ॥3॥
 जौ सुतहित लिये नाम अजामिलके अघ अमित न दहते ।
 तौ जमघट साँसति-हर हमसे बृषभ खोजि खोजि नहते ॥4॥
 जौ जगबिदित पतितपावन, अति बाँकुर बिरद न बहते ।
 तौ बहुकलप कुटिल तुलसीसे, सपनेहुँ सुगति न लहते ॥5॥

(97)

jau pai hari janakē auguna gahatē.
 tau surapati kururāja bālisōm, kata haṭhi baira bisahatē. 1.
 jau japa jāga jōga brata barajita, kēvala prēma na cahatē.
 tau kata sura munibara bihāya braja, gōpa-gēha basi rahatē. 2.
 jau jaham̐-taham̐ prana rākhi bhagatakō, bhajana-prabhā'u na kahatē.
 tau kali kaṭhina karama-māraga jaṛa hama kēhi bhām̐ti nibahatē. 3.
 jau sutahita liyē nāma ajāmilakē agha amita na dahatē.
 tau jamaghaṭa sām̐sati-hara hamasē bṛṣabha khōji khōji nahatē. 4.
 jō jagabidita patitapāvana, ati bām̐kura birada na bahatē.
 tau bahukalapa kuṭila tulasīse, sapanēhum̐ sugati na lahatē. 5.

Verse no. 97—Oh Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is also known as 'Hari')! If you had paid attention or minded the faults and misdemeanours of your devotees and those who have surrendered themselves before you (jau pai hari janakē auguna gahatē), then why would you have willingly created enmity and hostility with Indra¹, Duryodhan² and Baali³ (tau surapati kururāja bālisōm, kata haṭhi baira bisahatē)?⁴ (1).

[¹⁻³A brief note on Indra, Duryodhan and Baali is added at the end of this verse.

⁴To wit, these three had not directly offended you, but you stood against them just because they had offended someone who had taken shelter with you, albeit the latter person was not without faults or blemishes. But you took their side because you have declared your nature of helping those who have come to surrender before you

and seek your protection, for then you overlook their shortcomings just like a parent who overlooks the misdeeds of his own child and protects him or her against others when they come to harm that child.]

If you had not sought love, devotion, affection and total surrender (*kēvala prēma na cahatē*) in place of doing Japa (constant repetition of divine formulas known as ‘Mantras’ and the Lord’s holy Name), religious sacrifices (such as fire sacrifices), rituals, penances, austerities, meditation, vows etc. (in order to accrue spiritual merit or credit) (*jau japa jāga jōga brata barajita*)—then why would you have resided in the household of Gopas (cowherds of Vrindavan) instead of in the abode of Gods (i.e. in the heaven), or at the hermitages of exalted hermits, sages, ascetics etc. (*tau kata sura munibara bihāya braja, gōpa-gēha basi rahatē*)⁵? (2).

[⁵To wit, Lord Krishna had obliged even the most humble and the ordinary folk of Vrindavan, called the “Gopas”, by living with them as one of them because the Lord was obliged to do so by the love and affection all of them showed to him. The Lord did not find the heaven where the gods dwell, nor the hermitages of great sages and hermits to be as attractive as the humble residences of the ordinary folks of Vrindavan although these gods duly worshipped the Lord in a formal way, and the sages and hermits diligently followed all practices sanctioned by the scriptures, such as doing a lot of Japa, religious sacrifices, meditation and other meritorious deeds. It is because the Gopas showed heartfelt love and affection for Lord Krishna, treating him as one of them, as their friend, brother and son, instead of treating him in a formal way as the Lord of the world. This clearly shows that love, affection and devotion for the Lord brings him nearer as compared to all other formal meritorious deeds taken together.]

If you had not preserved and upheld the dignity, self-respect, vows and supremacy of your devotees (*au jaham’taham’ prana rākhī bhagatakō*), and thereby establish the paramount nature and supreme effect that your worship and devotion has vis-à-vis other so many religious paths and spiritual practices that are all meritorious and credit worthy in their own right (*bhajana-prabhā’u na kahatē*)— then how would stupid, ignorant and idiots like us (the ordinary human beings who don’t have any religious or spiritual merit to their name) have ever survived in these difficult times and the rough path of doing countless deeds (some of which may be good, but the majority of which are bad and done out of existential compulsions) during the course of our lives in Kaliyug⁶ (*tau kali kaṭhina karama-māraga jara hama kēhi bhāmṭi nibahatē*)? (3).

[⁶To wit, we, the ordinary creatures of this age, who can’t do any religious meritorious deed worth the name, who cannot claim liberation and deliverance from the horrors of this world and the interminable sufferings that we are made to suffer in the course of our lives, who can’t expect or hope to have peace and happiness, rely solely on the Lord’s graceful, compassionate and merciful nature to have these benefits—to have peace and happiness, to have liberation and deliverance, to have succour from torments and freedom from sufferings, to be free from the fear of the evil consequences of our deeds and misdemeanours of which there are countless numbers, for otherwise we have no other chance or hope.]

Oh the eliminator of troubles and tribulations (*sāṃśati-hara*)! If you had not set a precedent by liberating Ajamil from the horrors of hell on the pretext that he had pronounced your holy Name ‘Narayan’ at least once—albeit he had done it to call his son of the same name (*jau sutahita liyē nāma ajāmilakē agha amita na dahatē*)—then the messengers (of Yam) would have searched out oxen like us in this world to tie them to their ploughs (i.e. all the sinful creatures like us would have been enslaved by the messengers of death and subjected to interminable sufferings if we did not have the tool of your divine Name to protect us from this doomed existence in hell)⁷ (*tau jamaghaṭa hamasē brṣabha khōji khōji nahatē*) (4).

[⁷Ajamil had called out to his son named “Narayan” to come and protect him when he became terrified upon seeing the horrifying forms of the messengers of Death who had come to drag him to hell as he had not done any meritorious deed in his life. Incidentally, the word “Narayan” also happened to be the name of Lord Vishnu. So, when he shouted “Narayan come here”, the Lord’s messengers thought that he was calling out to their Master, Lord Vishnu. They came instantly and freed the dying Ajamil from the clutches of the messengers of Yam, the God of Death. The messengers of Lord Narayan took Ajamil to the heaven.

Tulsidas alludes to this tale from the ancient scriptures to stress that the Lord’s holy Name is the only succour for the ordinary creatures in this world, for they can’t expect to be delivered from the horrors of death and hell by solely relying upon their deeds while alive. The reason is that it is impossible for anyone to be absolutely perfect and completely without sins, shortcomings, weaknesses and flaws in this world, and so perfect peace and bliss would always elude the creature. He will always be on tenterhooks of uncertainty and affright of punishment for the sins and misdeeds done in life, knowingly or inadvertently, if he does not take the shelter of Lord Ram and his holy Name—for this would be like an umbrella to protect him from the scorching sun of sins and evil deeds. Otherwise, the creature would be yoked to the symbolic plough of Yam and go round and round through the endless cycle of life and death, undergoing the punishment of the previous life in a new life, doing a set of deeds in this life to undergo their punishments in the next life. There would be no liberation and deliverance for the creature from the agonies of this hell-like situation.]

And, if you had not worn the garb of the famous quality (i.e. if you had not upheld your vows) of being a purifier and liberator of the distressed, the deprived, the downtrodden, the humble, the helpless and hapless creatures (*jō jagabidita patitapāvana, ati bāṃkura birada na bahatē*)—then rascals, the sinful, the evil fellows and miscreants like Tulsidas would not have expected any liberation even in their wildest of dreams for many Kalpas (eras) (*tau bahukalapa kuṭila tulasīṣē, sapanēhum sugati na lahatē*)⁸ (5).

[⁸To wit, if Lord Ram hath not taken the vow of providing liberation and deliverance to those who are humble and lowly, who are not able to do expected meritorious deeds in their lives by virtue of the strength of which they can independently attain liberation and deliverance, then only a miniscule number of creatures would have been fortunate to have freedom from the horrors of the cycle of life and death and its sufferings, for the vast majority would have suffered interminably. It is the grace and benediction of the Lord that even the sinful and lowly can expect to have peace and happiness under the shadow of Lord Ram’s umbrella symbolising mercy, compassion, kindness, benevolence, benediction and grace.] (5).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse. He points out that if one could get desired spiritual rewards relying solely on his own good efforts and due diligent following one or more paths sanctioned by the scriptures for obtaining such rewards, then what credit would Lord Ram get; what special powers he has; why is he so lauded and applauded by the scriptures and honoured as the Lord who provides liberation and deliverance even to those who have no scope of attaining freedom from the bondage of sins and sufferance from their horrifying consequences?

The uniqueness of Lord Ram is that once the creature takes his shelter and seeks his refuge—albeit this is done honestly to find redemption and with a firm determination that the sin and misdemeanour would not be henceforth repeated, that the sinner would mend his ways for good, and not done merely to escape punishment for the time being only to revert to dirty old ways once forgiven by the Lord—all his spiritual problems are taken care of; he finds freedom from worries as to what would happen to him due to the burden of sins on his head, is freed from all miseries and torments, is assured of liberation and deliverance, and can be sure to have peace and happiness for his soul.

¹Lord's enmity with Indra (Surapati): Once, Lord Krishna's second wife Satyabhama saw the flower of the Kalp Tree (Parijat tree) with her senior Rukmani. She asked Krishna to bring it for her also, so he went to heaven, fought with Indra and uprooted the entire Kalp Tree with its roots and planted it in the garden of Satyabhama to please her.

Kalpa Tree: The botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is *Adansonia Digitta* and is also called Parijat in Sanskrit meaning 'descended from the sea'. The English name of it is 'Coral Jasmine', in Latin language it is called *Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis* (nyctanthes means night flower while arbor tristis means sad tree), and in Hindi it is called 'Harsingar'. Its flowers are said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dyeing silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legend, it was produced during the churning of the ocean. The king of Gods, Indra, took it and planted it in his city Amravati. According to another legend (Vishnu Puran), a princess called Parijat fell in love with the Sun-God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the sun became disenchanted towards her overtures. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew on the ashes of her funeral pyre. The flowers of this tree could not bear the sight of the sun, it blooms only during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.

²Kururāja: The five Pandavas had kept a single woman (Draupadi) as their joint wives, played dice and staked Draupadi as a wager—all these were highly unethical, unrighteous, evil and ignoble deeds of the Pandavas. But seeing their loyalty and devotion towards himself, Lord Krishna overlooked their misdeeds, took their side and created animosity with the Kaurav king Duryodhan leading to the havoc causing Mahabharat war.

³Bāli (The monkey king): Similarly, though Sugriv was not fully above board, Sri Ram took his side and killed his elder brother to enable Sugriv to ascend the throne of Kishkindha.]

The Macrocosmic vis-à-vis the Microcosmic form of the Lord

(98)

ऐसी हरि करत दासपर प्रीति ।
 निज प्रभुता बिसारि जनके बस, होत सदा यह रीति ।।1।।
 जिन बाँधे सुर-असुर, नाग-नर, प्रबल करमकी डोरी ।
 सोइ अबिछिन्न ब्रह्म जसुमति हठि बाँध्यो सकत न छोरी ।।2।।
 जाकी मायाबस बिरंचि सिव, नाचत पार न पायो ।
 करतल ताल बजाय ग्वाल-जुबतिन्ह सोइ नाच नचायो ।।3।।
 बिस्वम्भर, श्रीपति, त्रिभुवनपति, बेद-बिदित यह लीख ।
 बलिसों कछु न चली प्रभुता बरु है द्विज माँगी भीख ।।4।।
 जाको नाम लिये छूटत भव-जनम-मरन दुख-भार ।
 अंबरीष-हित लागि कृपानिधि, सोइ जनमे दस बार ।।5।।
 जोग-बिराग, ध्यान-जप-तप करि, जेहि खोजत मुनि ग्यानी ।
 बानर-भालु चपल पसु पामर, नाथ तहाँ रति मानी ।।6।।
 लोकपाल, जम, काल, पवन, रबि, ससि सब आग्याकारी ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु उग्रसेनके द्वार बेंत कर धारी ।।7।।

(98)

aisī hari karata dāsapara prīti.
 nija prabhutā bisāri janakē basa, hōta sadā yaha rīti. 1.
 jina bām̐dhē sura-asura, nāga-nara, prabala karamakī ḍōrī.
 sō'i abichinna brahma jasumati haṭhi bām̐dhyō sakata na chōrī. 2.
 jākī māyābasa biran̐ci siva, nācata pāra na pāyō.
 karatala tāla bajāya gvāla-jubatinha sō'i nāca nacāyō. 3.
 bisvambhara, śrīpati, tribhuvanapati, bēda-bidita yaha līkha.
 balisōm̐ kachu na calī prabhutā baru hvai dvija mām̐gī bhīkha. 4.
 jākō nāma liyē chūṭata bhava-janama-marana dukha-bhāra.
 ambarīṣa-hita lāgi kṛpānidhi, sō'i janamē dasa bāra. 5.
 jōga-birāga, dhyāna-japa-tapa kari, jēhi khōjata muni gyānī.
 bānara-bhālu capala pasu pāmara, nātha tahām̐ rati mānī. 6.
 lōkapāla, jama, kāla, pavana, rabi, sasi saba āgyākārī.
 tulasidāsa prabhu ugrasēnakē dvāra bēnta kara dhārī. 7.

Verse no. 98—Sri Hari (i.e. Lord Ram who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu whose another name is 'Hari') shows his immensity of love and affection for his servants (devotees and followers) in such a way (aisī hari karata dāsapara prīti) that he feels subjugated to them, and would go to any length to keep his devotee happy and fulfil his wishes, forgetting his own exalted and majestic stature as the Lord of the entire creation (nija prabhutā bisāri janakē basa). [To wit, the Lord never feels hesitant, reluctant or shy to help and be in the company of even the most lowly and humble in spite of his majestic existence as the Lord of the Universe. He never feels that it is below his dignity and majesty to help the downtrodden, the destitute and the fallen.]

This is, in sooth and without any gainsay, his natural habit and an eternal temperament (hōta sadā yaha rīti). [To wit, this nature of the Lord is not artificial or ad-hoc, it is not shown by him to please someone or to serve any vested interest, but it

is a part of his natural character, it is his famous quality for which he has been known since time immemorial.] (1).

The supreme Lord of the world, known as the ‘Brahm’, who keeps a tight leash on the gods, the demons, the serpents and the humans, and drives them in accordance to their individual deeds (*jina bām̐dhē sura-asura, nāga-nara, prabala karamakī dōrī*)¹—the same Brahm, who is the eternal, uniform, immutable, universal and supreme Lord of creation (*sō’i abichinna brahma*), was tied forcefully to the pestle by mother Yasodha (mother of Lord Krishna) so much so that he could not untie himself and become free from this artificial bondage (which obviously he allowed himself to suffer willingly, for had he not wanted so no power in creation would have tied him for he was the supreme Lord of this creation and nothing could be done against his will) (*jasumati haṭhi bām̐dhyō sakata na chōrī*)² (2).

[¹Brahm is the Supreme Being and Lord of creation. He controls the entire world and its inhabitants, all the creatures, all the living beings of whatever denomination and stature, by the virtue of deeds done by them. No one can break free from this law: one reaps what one sows. And it is not an easy job and thing to do, for the gods and demons are super powerful creatures, and to control them and keep them under tight leash is no joke.

Even among the humans there are powerful persons, such as great kings and emperors, great sages, hermits and ascetics whom even the gods and the demons are afraid to offend.

The subterranean creatures represented by the serpents are cited here because they live a life that is not so open and almost hidden from view, for they spend the major part of their lives underground, in burrows, in thickets and caves and holes. Their lives are so secret and hidden from the world that one may think that they would easily escape punishment or reward for their activities. But this is not the case, for nothing is hidden from the supreme Lord who subjects them to the same laws of Karma (deeds) as he does other creatures of creation.

Only an Authority superior and more powerful than all the creatures of this creation can do it. In other words, the “Lord” is the most powerful Being in this creation and its supreme Authority, its Sovereign, and hence no one can subdue him.

In this context, is it not self humiliating for such a mighty Lord and Authority to subject himself to be subdued by ordinary mortal creatures? But the Lord is so gracious that, first he willingly leaves his exalted abode in the heaven and abandons his exalted stature as the cosmic Lord of creation who is infinite and invisible, who is most sublime and subtle, to become like an ordinary creature who has a gross body and is subjected to all the laws governing such mortal beings in his various manifestations or incarnations. One such form was that of Lord Krishna to which Tulsidas alludes to in this verse. The reason why Krishna was tied by his worldly mother is narrated in brief below.

²Krishna and Yashoda: Once, mother Yasoda tried to punish the naughty child Krishna—who had been creating mischief by eating curd and butter stored in the household—by tying him to a pestle, but the rope fell short. The mother used all the rope available in the house, but still could not tie him. Finally, the Lord decided to please the mother by allowing himself to get tied by maneuvering things in such a way that she got him tied to the pestle with the same rope with which she had failed earlier.

The idea is that the supreme Lord of this creation would go to any length, even allowing himself to be tied by worldly fetters though ironically he is the one who

breaks them for the rest of the creatures, if he finds that his small action of surrendering to the wish of his devotee would please him or her. In this case, mother Yasodha wished to tie Lord Krishna to the pestle in order to subdue him and prevent him from eating butter and curd at even odd hours of the day and night, and breaking the earthen pots which contained them, which the Lord was accustomed to doing as part of his worldly sporting activity, he decided to get tied to the pestle just to oblige his mother because she was getting frustrated at not being able to tie him initially. Had the Lord wanted, no matter what Yasodha did she would not have been able to tie him to anything by anything.

There is a remarkable message here: and it is that the Lord showed by his own example here that he himself feels obliged to obey the laws of creation that have been set by him for all other creatures, that they will have to endure the result of their own deeds. In this case, he was punished by his worldly mother for the mischief he was making as a child, and she wished to tie him to a heavy pestle so that his movement is restricted and he is unable to do more mischief. At first the Lord showed that if he does not want no one can tie him, but then he immediately changed his stance and got tied willingly to prove that he has no regrets in subjecting himself to the same rules that he enforces upon the rest of the creatures.]

He, under the influence of whose delusory powers known as ‘Maya’ (*jāḱī māyābasa*), even Brahma (the creator) and Shiva (the concluder of creation) have danced since time immemorial to the tunes set by him (i.e. they have always obeyed his commands and did his bidding, though they are mighty Gods in their own right), but still they could not find the other end of it (i.e. could not measure the powers of the Lord nor his Maya) (*birañci siva, nācata pāra na pāyō*)— the same Lord was himself made to dance in the courtyard of their homes by the Gopis of Vrindavan who cheered and jested merrily and clapped their hands as the Lord danced to please them (*karatala tāla bajāya gvāla-jubatinha sō'i nāca nacāyō*)³ (3).

[³This alludes to the playful activities of Lord Krishna while he was still a child at Vrindavan. The ‘Gopis’ were the cowherd women folk who loved Krishna so much that they enjoyed his company. They would prevail upon him to dance while they clapped and sang. As the Lord obliged them, all of them cheered and laughed merrily. Tulsidas cites this instance from the life of Lord Krishna to stress that the Lord who had made even the most senior gods of creation such as Brahma and Shiva dance to his tunes and do his bidding, was so obliged by the love and affection showed to him by the ordinary Gopis of Vrindavan that he danced in all odd ways just to please them and make them cheerful.]

It is well established in the world and affirmed by even the Vedas (ancient scriptures) (*bēda-bidita yaha likha*) that the Lord God (i.e. the Supreme Being known as ‘Brahm’) is the sustainer and care-taker of the whole universe (or creation) (*bisvambhara*), is the Lord of Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity) (*śrīpati*), and is the undisputed Lord of the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and subterranean) (*tribhuvanapati*)— even that Lord (who is so exalted, so vast in his authority, form and powers, and supreme) had to become an alms-seeker Brahmin called ‘Vaaman’ (the dwarf mendicant) in order to beg before the great and generous donor king ‘Bali’ because all the Lord's fame, potent, powers and glories became ineffective and lustreless (i.e. were no match for) in front of the latter (Bali) (*balisōm kachu na calī prabhutā baru hvai dvija māmḡī bhīkha*)⁴ (4).

[⁴Lord Vishnu, the ‘Supreme Being’, had to assume a humble form of a Brahmin mendicant to beg for alms before king Bali, who was the Sovereign ruler of the whole earth at that time. By this humble act, the Lord showed that he had the greatest respect for Bali who was true to his words, was renowned as a liberal donor who will never turn away anyone seeking anything from him, was extremely morally upright and a diligent follower of righteousness. The Lord showed that he might have had to subdue Bali’s quest to conquer the entire world by forcing him to donate it to him in his form as an alms seeking Brahmin, but it was done to maintain law and order in his creation, for otherwise someone else would also try the same thing even if he was not so upright and righteous as Bali. The Lord had to enforce discipline and ensure that no living being, in this case Bali, no matter how good and meritorious he may be, ever break the law of creation by trying to become immortal, almighty and Lord of the world. If he allowed this for Bali, he would set a bad precedent for the future, so he had to intervene and stop Bali’s quest.

But the Lord did this with the greatest of humility and respect for Bali, upholding Bali’s desire to rule the world, because only a ‘ruler or sovereign’ can grant the largesse of land to others as Bali did in favour of Lord Vishnu who was disguised as a mendicant Brahmin.

Another important point to note is that Lord Vishnu, whose original form is so vast that it encompasses the entire creation and encloses it from its outer periphery, giving the Lord the epithet of a ‘Viraat Purush’, the ‘Being with a vast and infinite cosmic form’, chose to become a ‘dwarf’ mendicant named ‘Vaaman’. This was a significant gesture for Lord Vishnu—for he wished to tell the world that when it comes to his devotees, he is smaller and humbler than them!

The story of Vaaman and Bali is narrated as a note appended to verse no. 52 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.]

He, the mere remembrance of whose holy Name liberates a soul from the burden of sorrows and miseries that is a part of the cycle of birth and death (*jāḱō nāma liyē chūṭata bhava-janama-marana dukha-bhāra*)—the same Lord had to manifest himself ten times (as an incarnation) for the sake of his devotee Ambarisa (*ambarīṣa-hita lāgi kṛpānidhi, sō’i janamē dasa bāra*)⁵ (5).

[⁵King Ambarisa: King Ambrish was a great devotee of the Lord and faithfully kept fast on Ikadashi days (the 11th day of the first fortnight of the moon). The scriptures prescribe that the fast of the Ikadashi should be broken the next day on Dwadashi but before the third or Trayodashi by offering food to a Brahmin who comes first on the day of Dwadashi. Incidentally, sage Durbasha, known for his hot temper and wrathful nature, came, and was invited by the king to accept meals. The sage accepted but went out to do his rituals from which he did not return on time. Meanwhile, the auspicious time was soon due to expire, so in his predicament, Ambarish was advised by Brahmin advisors to put a leaf of Tulsi (basil plant) in his mouth to break the fast. When Durbasha returned, he became so enraged that he cursed Ambarish to take birth ten times. Not contented, he produced a demoness called ‘Kṛitya’ and ordered her to eat the king. It was too much for the Lord to bear—so he ordered his ‘Chakra’ (discus) which cut the demoness’ head and rushed at Durbasha. He ran in panic from place to place in the 3 Lokas, but no one gave him shelter. At last, he sought forgiveness from Vishnu who ordered him to go and ask for forgiveness from Ambarish. Durbasha came and fell at the king’s feet. Then Vishnu said that he accepts the curse himself (in place of Ambarish) and shall take birth as a human on this earth (as an incarnation) ten times, while at the same time he relieved

his devotee Ambarish of the curse. Refer also to verse no. 137, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika.

An instant example of how the Lord's holy Name provides liberation from the horrors of life and death is that of 'Ajamil' cited in verse no. 97, stanza no. 4 herein above.]

He, who is being constantly searched and sought by learned and wise hermits, sages, ascetics (jēhi khōjata muni gyānī) by undertaking all possible means that have been prescribed for attaining success in this endeavour, such as doing meditation, practicing renunciation, concentration, chanting of Mantras, and doing penances and various other austerities (jōga-birāga, dhyāna-japa-tapa kari)— verily indeed, the same Lord (in his incarnation as Lord Ram) had made friends with lowly creatures such as monkeys, bears and other humble and fickle creatures who had the physical form of animals (which form is not something to be proud of in the hierarchy of creation) (bānara-bhālu capala pasu pāmara, nātha tahāmṛati mānī)⁶ (6).

[⁶Tulsidas alludes to the Lord's manifestation as Lord Ram when he had befriended monkeys and bears of Kishkindha, and even the vulture Jatayu, or in other words, made himself easily accessible to these creatures, though the Lord is so great and inaccessible that even the most exalted amongst the learned sages and hermits fail to attain him in spite of their best of efforts and adopting the best of means for fulfilment of their wishes.

The Lord of the world had no second thoughts in keeping company with such lowly creatures as monkeys, bears and vulture. He showed that he has no trace of ego and pride in him, and neither is he pretentious and haughty as to assume an aura of greatness in front of humble creature who don't even know what is meant by being almighty and supreme, for these ordinary creatures, the monkeys and bears, simply knew that "Ram" was their Lord and Friend, and this was sufficient for them to have full faith and devotion for Lord Ram, something that the Lord gave precedence to as compared to wisdom and knowledge.

Why is this so? Because the Lord has declared that he is like a loving mother or father who is more concerned about the welfare and good of their innocent child, a child who may have some physical and mental shortcomings or deformities that he can't lead a normal life and is fully dependent upon them, then an intelligent and robust offspring who would be able to stand on his own two feet and fend for himself. These humble and lowly creatures such as the monkeys and bears and vultures did not know how to attain liberation and deliverance by practicing meditation, austerities and renunciation, or repeating the holy Names of the Lord and other spiritual means to have their spiritual well-being. So the Lord obliged them by showing his grace upon them. As for the learned sages and hermits and ascetics, they would also attain their spiritual welfare, but they do not need the help of the Lord to support them.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 43 which explicitly endorses this view in the words of Lord Ram himself.]

He, to whom the Lokpals (guardians of the world), Yam (God of death), Kaal (Death himself; even the factor of Time that rules over the entire creation), Vayu (the Wind God; the essential forces of Nature that inject life and movement in creation), the Sun and the Moon (the two dominant entities in the heaven around which the life cycle of every living being rotates) are all obedient and subordinate (lōkapāla, jama, kāla, pavana, rabi, sasi saba āgyākārī)— Tulsidas says that the same Lord stands as a

guard himself with a stick in hand at the gates of Ugrasen⁷ out of affection and respect for the latter (*tulasidāsa prabhu ugrasēnakē dvāra bēnta kara dhārī*) (7).

[⁷Ugrasen: The father of Kansha, the maternal uncle of Lord Krishna, was Ugrasen. Kansha had thrown his father into prison and usurped the throne. Lord Krishna had slayed Kansha, reinstated Ugrasen to the throne, and became his door-keeper or guard.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse. Further, this verse shows that the supreme Lord can be subservient to his most ordinary devotees.]

Glory of Rāma's Holy Name

(99)

बिरद गरीबनिवाज रामको ।
गावत बेद-पुरान, संभु-सुक, प्रगट प्रभाउ नामको ॥1॥
ध्रुव, प्रहलाद, विभीषन, कपिपति, जड़, पतंग, पांडव, सुदामको ।
लोक सुजस, परलोक सुगति, इन्हमें को है राम कामको ॥2॥
गनिका, कोल, किरात, आदिकबि, इन्हते अधिक बाम को ।
बाजिमेघ कब कियो अजामिल, गज गायो कब सामको ॥3॥
छली, मलीन, हीन सब ही अँग, तुलसी सो छीन छामको ।
नाम-नरेस-प्रताप प्रबल जग, जुग-जुग चालत चामको ॥4॥

(99)

birada garībanivāja rāmakō.
gāvata bēda-purāna, sambhu-suka, pragaṭa prabhā'u nāmakō. 1.
dhruva, prahalāda, vibhīṣana, kapipati, jaṛa, pataṅga, pāṇḍava, sudāmakō.
lōka sujasa, paralōka sugati, inhamēm kō hai rāma kāmakō. 2.
ganikā, kōla, kirāta, ādikabi, inhatē adhika bāma kō.
bājimēgha kaba kiyō ajāmila, gaja gāyō kaba sāmakō. 3.
chalī, malīna, hīna saba hī amṅa, tulasī sō chīna chāmakō.
nāma-narēsa-pratāpa prabala jaga, juga-juga cālata cāmakō. 4.

Verse no. 99—The glorious reputation, the professed vocation, the well-known temperament, the inherent habit and natural inclination of Lord Sri Ram for which he is so famed and renowned in this world (*birada rāmakō*) is to fully please, satisfy and help those who are poor, humble, helpless, hapless, deprived and downtrodden, those who don't expect solace and succour anywhere else and from anyone else; the Lord takes full care of such people and provides for their protection and welfare (*garībanivāja*).

The Vedas, the Purans, Lord Shiva and sage Shukdeo (the parrot-sage) etc. (*gāvata bēda-purāna, sambhu-suka*)—all have asserted this fact and sing this glory of the Lord. The positive affect, the mystical powers, the potent and influence of

the Lord's holy Name "RAM" is evident from a wide range of instances cited below (pragaṭa prabhā'u nāmako) (1).

Dhruv, Prahalad, Vibhishan, Sugriv, inanimate stone (Ahilya), bird (vulture Jatau, crow Kagbhusund)¹, the five Pandavas² and Sudama³ (dhruva, prahalāda, vibhīṣana, kapipati, jaṛa, pataṅga, pāṇḍava, sudāmakō) —all of them were bestowed with a good fame and renown in this world while they were alive (lōka sujasa), and were given an auspicious destination after their death (i.e. were given salvation) (paralōka sugati).

Who among them was of any use to the Lord? (inhamēm kō hai rāma kāmako) [But still the Lord showed his grace upon them as they had taken the shelter of his holy Name and sought his protection.] (2).

[¹The story of Dhruv, Prahalad, Vibhishan, Sugriv, Ahilya, Jatau etc. have been narrated in brief earlier in verse nos. 25, 43, 57, 78 and 86 herein above of this book Vinai Patrika.

²The story of the five Pandava brothers is central to the story of the epic war of Mahabharat. They were numerically miniscule and had no might that comes with being a king of a great kingdom, for all numbers and powers were in favour of their cousins, the Kaurav brothers, who were not only a hundred in number but had the backing of the mighty kingdom of which Hasitinapur was the capital. The Pandavas had been exiled and had been hounded by the Kauravas, and they roamed around for the fear of their lives. Lord Krishna took pity on them, and he took up their cause personally. This resulted in the savage and calamitous war of Mahabharat where the mighty army of the Kauravas was defeated and all of them killed, while all the five Pandavas survived the war and their honour was restored with this victory. The credit went solely to Lord Krishna.

³Sudama: He was a classmate of Krishna during their adolescent days, but fell on bad days and became extremely impoverished. At the behest of his wife, he once went to pay a visit to Krishna who, by this time, had become the great king of Dwarka. But Sudama was so wretchedly poor that he had nothing but four fistfulls of puffed rice flakes to take as a visiting gift for Krishna. Sri Krishna was so moved at this gesture and at Sudama's abject poverty that he not only accepted those four humble fistfulls of dry coarse puffed rice flakes but also rewarded him with immense wealth and prosperity which even put Kuber, the God of wealth, to shame.

What Tulsidas means is: Krishna had nothing to gain by showing honour to Sudama who was utterly poor and humble, a person with no means and wherewithal. But he loved his friend 'Krishna', and so the Lord honoured him for this affection.]

Who was a worse sinner and more fallen than (inhatē adhika bāma kō) Ganika (the whore named Jiwanti)⁴, the Kol-Kirats (tribals such as Guha-Nishad)⁵, and the great poet Valmiki (because he was a cruel bandit and hunter once before being transformed into a great sage)⁶ (ganikā, kōla, kirāta, ādikabi)?

When did Ajamil perform the 'Ashwamegh Yagya' (the horse sacrifice) (bājimēgha kaba kiyō ajāmila), and when did Gaja, the elephant, sing Sam-Veda for which they got such excellent rewards which are usually reserved for highly acclaimed and learned persons who undertake these exercises (gaja gāyō kaba sāmako)?⁷ (3).

[⁴The story of Ganika is narrated in verse no. 94.

⁵The ‘Kol and Kirats’ were the humble and illiterate tribals whom Lord Ram met and obliged during his way to the forest. He conversed with them, sat surrounded by them to give them his company, partook of food they offered, and did everything practical to please them and make them feel happy. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 88; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 135—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 137; and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 250—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 251.

⁶The story of Valmiki is narrated in verse no. 57 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

[Now, in this stanza Tulsidas talks about himself and says—] ‘Who is more deceitful, crooked, darkened or lowly (sinful), meek, devoid of all resources, lean and thin and worn out (emaciated; lacking proper nourishment due to lack of resources and luck) than Tulsidas (*chalī, malīna, hīna saba hī amṛga, tulasī sō chīna chāmakō*)?

But, in the kingdom of a King represented by Lord Sri Ram's holy Name, and only due to his majesty's authority, powers and potentials (*nāma-narēsa-pratāpa prabala jaga*), even worthless coins made of hide (leather—instead of some precious metal such as silver and gold, even copper or bronze that is normally the way coins of great kings are made of) assume great value and becomes a currency much sought after (*juga-juga cālata cāmakō*)⁷ (4).

[⁷Tulsidas means that even the wretched sinners and lowly creatures who have no worth themselves have been attaining respect and salvation by the good influence of Sri Ram's holy Name for a long time in his kingdom. So if this is the case, then he says that he is also sure and hopes that he too would get to attain salvation and due respect in the kingdom of Lord Ram by relying on the strength of the Lord's holy Name and its potential powers as briefed above.

The picture that Tulsidas presents of himself in this stanza is simply to emphasise that he is extremely poor and ordinary, and that in the usual course of life he cannot expect any good for himself. But as things turned out for him, he had become one of the most respected poet and devotee of the Lord the annals of history has recorded. So, Tulsidas assigns the credit for this achievement entirely to Lord Ram and his holy Name.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Rāma's glory

(100)

सुनि सीतापति—सील—सुभाउ ।
 मोद न मन, तन पुलक, नयन जल, सो नर खेहर खाउ ।।1।।
 सिसुपनतें पितु, मातु, बन्धु, गुरु, सेवक, सचिव, सखाउ ।
 कहत राम—बिधु—बदन रिसोहैं सपनेहुँ लख्यो न काउ ।।2।।
 खेलत संग अनुज बालक नित, जोगवत अनट अपाउ ।
 जीति हारि चुचुकारि दुलारत, देत दिवावत दाउ ।।3।।
 सिला साप—संताप—बिगत भइ, परसत पावत पाउ ।

दर्ई सुगति सो न हेरि हरष हिय, चरन छुएको पछिताउ ।।4।।
 भव-धनु भंजि निदरि भूपति भृगुनाथ खाइ गये ताउ ।
 छमि अपराध, छमाइ पाँय परि, इतौ न अनत समाउ ।।5।।
 कह्यो राज, बन दियो नारिबस, गरि गलानि गयो राउ ।
 ता कुमातुको मन जोगवत ज्यौं निज तनु मरम कुघाउ ।।6।।
 कपि-सेवा-बस भये कनौड़े, कह्यौ पवनसुत आउ ।
 देबेको न कछू रिनियाँ हौं धनिक तूँ पत्र लिखाउ ।।7।।
 अपनाये सुग्रीव बिभीषन, तिन न तज्यो छल-छाउ ।
 भरत सभा सनमानि सराहत, होत न हृदय अघाउ ।।8।।
 निज करुना करतूति भगतपर, चपत चलत चरचाउ ।
 सकृत प्रनाम प्रनत जस बरनत, सुनत कहत फिरि गाउ ।।9।।
 समुझि समुझि गुनग्राम रामके, उर अनुराग बढाउ ।
 तुलसिदास अनयास रामपद पाइहै प्रेम-पसाउ ।।10।।

(100)

sunī sītāpati-sīla-subhā'u.

mōda na mana, tana pulaka, nayana jala, sō nara khēhara khā'u. 1.
 sisupanatēm pitu, mātu, bandhu, guru, sēvaka, saciva, sakhā'u.
 kahata rāma-bidhu-badana risōhairm sapanēhum' lakhyō na kā'u. 2.
 khēlata saṅga anuja bālaka nita, jōgavata anaṭa apā'u.
 jīti hāri cucukāri dulārata, dēta divāvata dā'u. 3.
 silā sāpa-santāpa-bigata bha'i, parasata pāvata pā'u.
 da'ī sugati sō na hēri haraṣa hiya, carana chu'ēkō pachitā'u. 4.
 bhava-dhanu bhañji nidari bhūpati bhṛgunātha khā'i gayē tā'u.
 chami aparādha, chamā'i pām'ya pari, itau na anata samā'u. 5.
 kahyō rāja, bana diyō nāribasa, gari galāni gayō rā'u.
 tā kumātukō mana jōgavata jyaurm nija tanu marama kughā'u. 6.
 kapi-sēvā-basa bhayē kanaurē, kahyau pavanāsuta ā'u.
 dēbēkō na kachū riniyām' haurm dhanika tūm' patra likhā'u. 7.
 apanāyē sugrīva bibhīṣana, tina na tajyō chala-chā'u.
 bharata sabhā sanamāni sarāhata, hōta na hṛdaya aghā'u. 8.
 nija karunā karatūti bhagatapara, capata calata caracā'u.
 sakṛta pranāma pranata jasa baranata, sunata kahata phiri gā'u. 9.
 samujhi samujhi gunagrāma rāmakē, ura anurāga barhā'u.
 tulasidāsa anayāsa rāmapada pā'ihai prēma-pasā'u. 10.

Verse no. 100—On hearing the (benevolent, merciful, gracious, magnanimous, loving, courteous, tolerant and kind) natural disposition and virtuous character of the Lord of Sita, Sri Ram (sunī sītāpati-sīla-subhā'u), if one does not feel ecstatic and immensely glad at heart (mōda na mana), if one's body is not thrilled (tana pulaka), if one's eyes are not filled with tears of overwhelming love, affection and gratitude for such a Lord (nayana jala)—it is far better for such a foolish person to roam about aimlessly in this world, in absolute futility and literally throwing fistfulls of dust in his eyes and mouth (sō nara khēhara khā'u) than expecting any kind of welfare and well-being for himself in this life or the life hereafter. (1).

Ever since my childhood (*sisupanatēm*), my parents (father, mother), brother, teacher, servant, advisor and friend (*pitu, mātu, bandhu, guru, sēvaka, saciva, sakhā'u*)—all have been saying that none of them had ever seen any sign of indignation, bitterness, anger, wrath, malice, ill-will, vengeance or a sense of reprisal (*kahata risōhairm lakhyō na kā'u*) on the moon-like (sweet and pleasant) face of Lord Sri Ram even in their dreams (*rāma-bidhu-badana sapanēhum*).

[That is, I (Tulsidas) have been always told by my elders that they have never seen Lord Ram angry. His countenance is always sweet and welcoming.] (2).

As a child, Lord Ram would daily go out to play with his three brothers (Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan) and other children of the city (of Ayodhya) (*khēlata saṅga anuja bālaka nita*). During the games, he (Lord Sri Ram) would never bother about (i.e. had overlooked) the many nuisances, mischief and cheating committed by them though he saw and knew everything (*jōgavata anaṭa apā'u*).

The Lord would voluntarily accept defeat inspite of apparently winning the game he was playing with the children just to please the latter and make them feel happy (*jīti hāri cucukāri*).

Not only this, the Lord would call them (his brothers and friends) affectionately (*dulārata*), and tell them the tact he would be using to play the next game (i.e. he told them about the secret manauverings he would adopt and steps he would take to win the game so that they can beat him and win the game). He would even inspire others (especially his three brothers) to do so (so that the children of Ayodhya always won the game and were filled with joy and exhilaration) (*dēta divāvata dā'u*)¹. (3).

[¹Tulsidas wishes to tell us how loving and kind Lord Ram was even during the days of his childhood. He would voluntarily lose the game so that others won albeit he could have easily won it, just to make his friends and brothers who defeated him in the game feel happy and joyful at the victory.

In other words this means that the Lord is so gracious and accomodating that he would never mind if he has to suffer a bit and be subjected to ridicule and scrutiny in this world if any of his deeds and actions helped his devotees, if he could be instrumental in giving happiness and joy to those who have come to seek refuge and shelter with him, those who depend upon him and have no where to go except him.

Why then, is it not foolish not to take shelter with such a Lord; is it not utter stupidity to go begging at the doors of others when such a welcoming and benevolent Lord is waiting for you with out-stretched arms to come to him?

This is what Tulsidas means in stanza no. 1 of this verse.]

Merely by the touch of his (Lord Sri Ram's) holy feet (*parasata pāvata pā'u*), Ahilya, who was turned in to a stone by a curse, was liberated from her torments (*silā sāpa-santāpa-bigata bha'i*). She was provided with the boon of an exalted stature (i.e. she was restored to her former self with no taint to her character; “*daī sugati sō*”)—but, instead of feeling proud or glad at this noble act (*na hēri haraṣa hiya*), Sri Ram felt regret at having to touch a sage's wife with his feet (*carana chu'ēkō pachitā'u*)². (4).

[²The story of Ahilya is narrated in verse no. 43 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

The arrogance and haughtiness of the assembled princes was removed when Lord Sri Ram broke Lord Shiva's stubborn bow (at Janakpur, at the time of the marriage ceremony of Sita) (*bhava-dhanu bhar̥ji nidari bhūpati*)³.

At this, when sage Parashuram came and showed his annoyance and anger (*bhrgunātha khā'i gayē tā'u*), he (Sri Ram) forgave him for his misdemeanours and arrogant behaviour (*chami aparādha*), and instead, the Lord made Laxman (his younger brother) ask for forgiveness for his previous impertinent behaviour with the sage and himself fell at the feet of Parashuram to ask for forgiveness for any wrongdoing (*chamā'i pām̐ya pari*). In all sooth and without gainsay, there is no greater show of humility and modesty compared to this act of the Lord anywhere in this world (*itau na anata samā'u*)⁴. (5).

[³Sita's father Janak had organised an elaborate ceremony to choose a groom for her. He had made a vow that anyone who breaks an old bow of Lord Shiva lying in his family's custody as the condition for the successful candidate for marrying Sita. All great kings and princes of every corner of the earth had assembled, but no one could move the bow. At this juncture, Lord Ram easily broke this bow and established his fame in this great assembly, making himself known in all the four corners of the world as the strongest warrior of that time.

This story is narrated in great detail in Tulsidas' epic book *Ram Charit Manas*, in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 9 that precede Doha no. 210—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precede Doha no. 265.

⁴When sage Parashuram heard about the breaking of the bow, he became exceedingly angry because he worshipped Lord Shiva to whom the bow had belonged long time ago before the Lord had himself discarded it and had given it to ancestors of Janak, the father of Sita, for safekeeping. So, the sage came angrily to punish the person who had broken the bow. At the venue at Janakpur, there was a heated exchange between him and Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram, though the Lord himself always tried to pacify the sage. Finally, when the sage's anger had dissipated and he calmed down, the Lord not only forgave him for his angry outburst but also bowed himself before him, and made Laxman to also do so, to show his respect to Parashuram as he was a great and senior sage.

This story is narrated in great detail in Tulsidas' epic book *Ram Charit Manas*, in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precede Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precede Doha no. 285.]

King Darsrath (Lord Ram's worldly father), under the evil and undue influence of Kaikeyi (the step mother of the Lord and the king's third queen), had given him (Sri Ram) exile even after declaring that he would be anointed prince-regent of the kingdom (of Ayodhya) (*kahyō rāja, bana diyō nāribasa*). As a consequence the king was filled with great regret and had died due to the shame and ignominy of his act (*gari galāni gayō rā'u*).

Lord Sri Ram had even cared for the sentiments of such an evil and wicked mother as Kaikeyi (*tā kumātukō mana jōgavata*) as if someone takes special care of the painful wound on the sensitive parts of his body (*jyaur̥n nija tanu marama kughā'u*)⁵. (6).

[⁵Lord Ram always ensured that none of his actions or words were against Kaikeyi's wishes, and was very careful not to say or do anything that would hurt her feelings or be insulting to her in any way. When confronted by her and told to go to the forest, he did not show any rancour or anger at her; rather he politely and with all civility accepted her wishes and told her that it would be his privilege to do what she and his father wish for him. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 39—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 43.

Kaikeyi is treated as a sore wound for the family because her attitude and actions that forced king Dasrath to send Lord Ram to exile in the forest for fourteen years made the whole family suffer and the king himself dying like the case when the whole body suffers pain and misery due to a sore wound on one of its parts.

Briefly, the story is that Kaikeyi wanted to make her own son Bharat the crown prince and regent of the kingdom. King Dasrath had promised her two words-of-honour long ago. So she invoked those vows and asked him to send Lord Ram to the forest for fourteen years as fulfilment of one vow, and to appoint Bharat on the throne as the second fulfilment. Lord Ram went to the forest cheerfully to keep the promise of his father, but though Kaikeyi was the cause of the turmoil that submerged the entire kingdom and caused the death of Dasrath, the Lord never showed any disrespect to her. Even her own son Bharat had vehemently insulted her and never talked with her for the rest of her life (refer especially to: Geetawali Ramayan, Uttar Kand, verse no. 37 which expressly says this); she was abhorred by all the citizens of Ayodhya, but Lord Ram took great care to not do anything to hurt her more. The Lord even went to the extent of paying her a visit specially to assuage her feelings and tell her that he harbours no hard feelings for her after his return to Ayodhya at the end of his exile (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 10).

The full event is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precede Doha no. 81; from Chaupai line no. 4 that precede Doha no. 142—to Doha no. 182.

This shows the nature of Lord Ram—that he never does or says anything against even those who have caused him great suffering; nay, not only to him but even to others. Instead, he tries his best to please them who have sorely made things difficult for him; he tries to fulfil their wishes even if this means a lot of sufferance and miseries for himself and those who are closely related to him, such as his wife Sita and his brother Laxman who too had to suffer with Lord Ram during his exile in the forest for fourteen long years.]

When he (Lord Sri Ram) was greatly obliged and indebted to Hanuman for the services rendered by the latter (*kapi-sēvā-basa bhayē kanaurē*), the Lord called him near and said affectionately, 'Oh son of Wind-God! Come here (*kahyau pavanāsuta ā'u*). I have nothing to give you (in return for your services; "*dēbēkō na kachū*"). I am indebted and highly grateful to you (*riniyām' haum*)! You are my creditor; if you wish you can take this from me in writing (*dhanika tūm' patra likhā'u*).'⁶ (7).

[⁶Lord expressed this sentiment for Hanuman when he had brought the information of Sita's whereabouts at Lanka to him. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 32.]

Sugriv and Vibhishan had not abandoned their cunning, deceit, crookedness and scheming nature, but you had still accepted them (as one of your own devotees) (apanāyē sugrīva bibhīṣana, tina na tajyō chala-chā'u)⁷.

You were always all praise for Bharat in a full court (i.e. you had always publicly praised Bharat) (bharata sabhā sanamāni sarāhata), and were never contented in your heart of doing so (hōta na hr̥daya aghā'u)⁸. (8).

[⁷Both Sugriv and Vibhishan had betrayed their elder brothers, Baali and Ravana respectively. But Lord Ram had overlooked this fault and negative trait in their character when they sought his protection against their tormentors, who ironically were their above mentioned brothers themselves. Sugriv was a monkey by birth, and Vibhishan was a demon. Though they had helped Lord Ram during his campaign to free Sita from the clutches of the demon king Ravana as a pretext to eliminate the cruel demons as promised by the Lord to the Gods and Mother Earth who had pleaded for his intervention and protection against the horrors perpetrated by the demons led by Ravana, these two fellows, i.e. Sugriv and Vibhishan, had not abandoned their basic nature which is characteristic of their race, viz. the monkey and the demon race respectively. Nonetheless, Lord Ram showed them great affection and respect, and promised them abiding friendship and invited them to come to his capital city of Ayodhya whenever they pleased to do so. Refer: Ram Charit Manas: (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 18; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 26 along with Chaupai line nos. 2-7 that precede it.

⁸Lord Ram had highly praised Bharat in full assembly at Chitrakoot where the former and all the prominent citizens of Ayodhya had gone in their attempt to bring the Lord home. The Lord wished to make sure that Bharat's sense of guilt, regret and contrition were eliminated, and he was assured that the Lord had no ill-feeling against him. By publicly praising Bharat and even going to the extent of saying that if Bharat wants he is ready to break his own vows and that of his father, which was to stay in the forest for fourteen years, and would instead go back to Ayodhya if Bharat insists, Lord Ram also sent a strong message to the citizens of Ayodhya to treat Bharat with great respect and politeness. This event is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 263—to Doha no. 264; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 304—Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 307.]

You feel almost burried in embarrassment when it is merely mentioned that you have been so gracious and benevolent towards your devotees (i.e. you do not like to hear yourself being praised; “nija karunā karatūti bhagatapara, capata calata caracā'u”).

But, even if someone as much as merely bows before you even once and takes refuge at your feet (sakar̥ta pranāma pranata)—you always praise him and never tire of describing his good fortune and virtues yourself (jasa baranata), like to hear about them from others (sunata), and inspire or instruct others to go around praising this person wherever they go (kahata phiri gā'u)⁹. (9).

[⁹To wit, Lord Ram does not wish that the world praise him, for he does not need publicity and advertisement for himself! But yes, he does want that those humble

beings who have taken shelter with him are given due respect and made to feel comfortable and honourable. The Lord realises that only the humble and the lowly, those who have been shunned and ill-treated by the world, come to seek his blessings and protection, and therefore by praising the whatever little goodness they have in them, the Lord wants to tell the world to keep its hands off them, not to insult them any longer as they have taken refuge with him and he has assured them of his protection.

Another interpretation is that Lord Ram is so gracious that he gives cognizance to even a small goodness in his devotees, and wants the world to recognise and accept it. He wishes to tell others who criticise his devotees and humiliate them that these devotees are more fortunate than their detractors for the Lord has himself chosen to praise them and highlight their goodness and merits, and that these detractors are not holy cows as they themselves are full of evil and sins about which others don't know; so let them beware!]

Understanding and realising these collective virtuous qualities of Lord Sri Ram whose heart is compassionate and tender, my (Tulsidas') heart overflows and is inundated with love and affection for the Lord (*samujhi samujhi gunagrāma rāmakē, ura anurāga barhā'u*).

Verily oh Tulsidas, it appears that due to this exhilarating and ecstatic feeling of joy, bliss and gratitude that you experience (at being a devotee of such a great, benevolent, kind and gracious Lord), you too would attain Lord Sri Ram's holy feet almost unawares (without any tangible effort made by you; “*tulasidāsa anayāsa rāmapada pā'ihai prēma-pasā'u*”)¹⁰. (10).

[¹⁰It is interesting to note this observation of Tulsidas. It implies that even if one begins to love Lord Ram and feel blessed by surrendering to him, one can be assured of redemption even if he or she may not have done any worthwhile meritorious spiritual deed in life. The joy and exhilaration that comes with being a devotee of Lord Ram is sufficient to give that happiness and peace of mind, joy to the heart as well as rest to the soul that one would get by doing so many meritorious deeds and practicing so many religious duties in life, which are all incidentally very cumbersome and difficult to fulfil.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Rāma is the only Benevolent Lord

(101)

जाउँ कहाँ तजि चरन तुम्हारे ।
काको नाम पतित-पावन जग, केहि अति दीन पियारे ।।1।।
कौने देव बराइ बिरद-हित, हठि हठि अधम उधारे ।
खग, मृग, ब्याध, पषान, बिटप जड़, जवन कवन सुर तारे ।।2।।
देव, दनुज, मुनि, नाग, मनुज सब, माया-बिबस बिचारे ।

तिनके हाथ दासतुलसी प्रभु, कहा अपनपौ हारे ।।३।।

(101)

jā'um̐ kahām̐ taji carana tumhārē.

kākō nāma patita-pāvana jaga, kēhi ati dīna piyārē. 1.

kaunē dēva barā'i birada-hita, haṭhi haṭhi adhama udhārē.

khaga, mṛga, byādha, paṣāna, biṭapa jaṛa, javana kavana sura tārē. 2.

dēva, danuja, muni, nāga, manuja saba, māyā-bibasa bicārē.

tinakē hātha dāsatulasī prabhu, kahā apanapau hārē. 3.

Verse no. 101—Oh Lord! Where else should I go except at your holy feet? [Where will I find refuge and shelter other than at your holy feet; where will I go if I leave you?]

Who else is called ‘patita-pāvana’ (the purifier of sinners, of those who are evil, vile, unrighteous and unscrupulous) in this world (except you)?

Who else dearly loves the wretched, the poor, the distressed, the humble, the hapless and the helpless creatures more than you? (1).

Till this date, which other God had purposefully and diligently searched out such creatures and provided salvation to the downtrodden, the miscreants, the rascals, the lowly and the sinners et al (haṭhi haṭhi adhama udhārē) just to uphold his fame, his promise, his vow, his reputation and his character of being a ‘salvation-provider’ to all and sundry (kaunē dēva barā'i birada-hita)?

Say, which God has given salvation and emancipation to a bird (Jatau), animals (monkeys, bears, deer etc.), a cruel hunter-cum-bandit (Valmiki), a stone (Ahilya), inanimate trees (Yamalarjun) and barbarians (the demons or other savage-minded creatures) (khaga, mṛga, byādha, paṣāna, biṭapa jaṛa, javana kavana sura tārē)? (2).

The Gods, demons, sages/hermits/ascetics, serpents (reptile-like creatures), humans etc.—all of them are ensnared by and under the control of ‘Maya’ (delusions, infatuations, ignorance, attachments) (dēva, danuja, muni, nāga, manuja saba, māyā-bibasa bicārē). [How can one, who is himself in fetters, liberate others? Therefore, I can’t expect any thing or any help from these poor fellows—“bicārē”.]

Hence, oh Lord, what will this Tulsidas gain by subjugating himself to them or seeking favours from them (instead of you) (tinakē hātha dāsatulasī prabhu, kahā apanapau hārē)?¹ (3).

[¹Everyone in this creation is subjected to some sort of fetters. Even the great Gods and exalted sages and hermits are not exempt from it. Tulsidas says what can he expect from them who are themselves slaves and bound in fetters of Maya.

Besides this, no one would want himself to be surrounded by sinners and lowly fellows; they would try to avoid such people if possible, and shoo them away if they happen to come near forcefully. But Lord Ram has a different attitude: he welcomes the lowly and the sinful, frees them of all their negative traits, makes them feel comfortable and transformed, and removes their worries and miseries. Say, what more would anyone want?

Tulsidas' advice to all is simple: It is wise and sensible to take shelter with Lord Ram, and not to go begging before so many gods and holy men. No one will help you except the Lord.]

[Note—This verse is extremely popular.]

Rarity of the Human Body, and the Frailty of the Mind

(102)

हरि! तुम बहुत अनुग्रह कीन्हों।
 साधन—धाम बिबुध—दुरलभ तनु, मोहि कृपा करि दीन्हों॥1॥
 कोटिहुँ मुख कहि जात न प्रभुके, एक एक उपकार।
 तदपि नाथ कछु और माँगिहौं, दीजै परम उदार॥2॥
 बिषय—बारि मन—मीन भिन्न नहिं होत कबहुँ पल एक।
 ताते सहौं बिपति अति दारुन, जनमत जोनि अनेक॥3॥
 कृपा—डोरि बनसी पद अंकुस, परम प्रेम—मृदु—चारो।
 एहि बिधि बेधि हरहु मेरो दुख, कौतुक राम तिहारो॥4॥
 हैं श्रुति—बिदित उपाय सकल सुर, केहि केहि दीन निहोरै।
 तुलसिदास येहि जीव मोह—रजु, जेहि बाँध्यो सोइ छोरै॥5॥

(102)

hari! tuma bahuta anugraha kīnhōm.
 sādhana-dhāma bibudha-duralabha tanu, mōhi kṛpā kari dīnhōm. 1.
 kōṭihum̐ mukha kahi jāta na prabhukē, ēka ēka upakāra.
 tadapi nātha kachu aura mām̐gihaum̐, dījai parama udāra. 2.
 biṣaya-bāri mana-mīna bhinna nahim̐ hōta kabahum̐ pala ēka.
 tātē sahaum̐ bipati ati dārūna, janamata jōni anēka. 3.
 kṛpā-ḍōri banasī pada aṅkusa, parama prēma-mṛdu-cārō.
 ēhi bidhi bēdhi harahu mērō dukha, kautuka rāma tihārō. 4.
 haim̐ śruti-bidita upāya sakala sura, kēhi kēhi dīna nihōrai.
 tulasidāsa yēhi jīva mōha-rajū, jēhi bām̐dhyō sō'i chōrai. 5.

Verse no. 102—[The idea expressed in this verse about the rarity of the human body and foolishness of letting go to waste this opportunity to attain liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death and its attendant miseries and horrors has been reiterated by Tulsidas also in his epic 'Ram Charit Manas' in its Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Doha no. 44.]

‘Oh Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram)! You had been very kind, benevolent and gracious upon me by giving me (tuma bahuta anugraha kīnhōm -- mōhi kṛpā kari dīnhōm)¹ a human body which is an instrument by which one can do so many

meritorious deeds, and attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation from the vicious cycle of birth and death (*sādhana-dhāma*).

This body is rare for even the Gods to obtain² (*bibudha-duralabha tanu*) (1).

[¹Here, the term “me” does not refer to the gross physical body of a person, but to his ‘true self’ which is his Atma or his pure conscious soul.

²Refer also to: Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 83, 84, 130, 135/1, 151, 194, 198-202 among others that also stress on the importance of the human body and its rarity, while emphasising, at the same time, upon the need to use it properly.

The Gods do not have a physical body, and therefore they are subjected to certain restrictions, drawbacks and handicaps that humans are free from. For instance, they can’t choose and pick to do any meritorious deeds themselves which would enhance their stature in the hierarchy of heaven; they cannot feed themselves for they depend upon offerings made to them by humans for their sustenance; they can’t enjoy the material things of this magnificent world and its countless physical charms; they can’t do Yoga or meditation, Tapa or austerity, Yagya or fire sacrifices, Dhyan or contemplation, Niyam and Niyam or observance of certain vows and sacraments that would enhance their fortunes, and so on.]

Though I cannot sufficiently describe even by using millions of mouths (i.e. I cannot explain how grateful and obliged I am for) the immensity and the excellence of the so many wonderful things that your majesty has so graciously done for me and the countless blessings that you have granted me due to your benevolence, benediction and munificence (*kōṭīhum mukha kahi jāta na prabhukē, ēka ēka upakāra*), but still oh Lord (*tadapi nātha*), I ask you for something extra (*kachu aura māṃgihaum*) which, being so generous and magnanimous as you surely are, please be kind to give me (*dījai parama udāra*) (2).

[In the following stanzas, Tulsidas uses the metaphor of the fish and the water to explain how a creature is attached to this world, and then goes on to pray to Lord Ram to free him from this vicious trap by using the metaphor of the fisherman’s fishing rod which pulls the fish out of the water.]

This fish-like mind of mine does not want to separate itself even for a moment (i.e. sever its ties and detach itself) from the water-like sensual pleasures and attractions of this mundane, materialistic world (*biṣaya-bāri mana-mīna bhinna nahim hōta kabahum pala ēka*).

[To wit, just like a fish is so intrinsically attached and emotionally bound to the water that it does not want to leave its natural habitat even for a fleeting moment, my mind and heart called the “Mana” are also so much attached to the sense objects of the world and its charms, as well as the sensual gratification that they derive by this involvement, that they do not wish to think of anything else. The result is that I get unwittingly sucked in this vortex even against my wish. But I feel helpless.]

Because of this, I am suffering a great deal (and see no end to it) (*tātē sahaum bipati ati dārūna*). I also have to repeatedly take birth in different forms (i.e. from different wombs, in the form of different types of living beings, with no end in sight from this cycle) (*janamata jōni anēka*)³ (3).

[³Tulsidas says that a person has got the human body after a long journey through thousands of births in countless forms. The aim of this body is to help the person attain final freedom from this vicious cycle of birth and death and its attendant horrors. Though of course the Atma, the true self of the person, wishes to do so, his ‘mind’ or Mana creates a hurdle. The Mana is an integral part of the body, and it decides what the physical body would like to do. It is like an advisor or minister of the king known as the Atma. Just like the case where the king acts through his minister, and if the minister is corrupt the king suffers, my Atma suffers entanglement with this world because my mind is corrupt and lustful. So he prays to Lord Ram and asks the merciful Lord to please help him on this front; tell him how he can control this wandering and indisciplined Mana. In the next stanza, Tulsidas tells us how this aim can be achieved.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 44.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram! (In order to capture or control this fish-like mind of mine—) Please be kind to make a string out of your kindness and graciousness (*krpā-dōri*), a hook (that is tied at the end of fishing rod) out of the imprint of the ‘goad’ marked on your holy feet (*banasī pada aṅkusa*), and then stick a soft bait symbolising your virtues of immensity of love and affection for me at the end of this hook (*parama prēma-mṛdu-cārō*).

Using it, pierce my fish-like mind, take me out of this water of delusions, sensual pleasures and allurements and temptations of this gross material world of sense objects, and in this way you can remove the cause of all my sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations (*ēhi bidhi bēdhi harahu mērō dukha*).

Oh Lord Ram, for you this is like a child's play (but for me it is an impossible task to free myself from the trap represented by this world and its countless temptations; so I need your help) (*kautuka rāma tihārō*)⁴ (4).

[⁴Tulsidas asks Lord Ram to save him from drowning in the water symbolised by this world and its temptations. He says that just like a fish is so enamoured of the water that it won't come out of it on its own, unless plucked out by a fisherman, so likewise his Mana is so hooked to this world that it won't leave it on its own accord unless Lord Ram forcibly picks it out from the swamp himself and frees it from its interminable sufferings. The Lord should show his grace and mercy upon his devotee by doing as requested, without having reservations of any kind, just like the fisherman fishes out the fish from the water without having any regrets. But while the fisherman's act kills the fish and he gets cursed by the fish, the kind act of the Lord would only help Tulsidas get rid of his immense sufferings, and in return the latter would be extremely grateful to the former and sing his glories for all times to come.]

The Vedas are full of prescriptions that outline the various means by which one can attain liberation and deliverance from his many sufferings and troubles (*hairṁ śruti-bidita upāya*), and there is no shortage of Gods to whom one can pray for freedom from his sufferings and expect being granted boons by them (*sakala sura*)⁵.

But this humble Tulsidas wonders where to go and roam about begging for mercy and praying for freedom from his sufferings (*kēhi kēhi dīna nihōrai*).’

Verily indeed, Tulsidas says that it is useless wondering here and there to ask others to untie the knot of the rope of Moha (attachments, infatuations and attractions for this sensual world) which has tied a creature to this world and its sense objects (tulasidāsa yēhi jīva mōha-raju), for the Lord who has tied the creature by this knot is the one who himself can untie the knot and free the creature (jēhi bām̐dhyō sō'i chōrai)⁶ (5).

[⁵Refer: Verse no. 103, stanza no. 1 herein below.

⁶Tulsidas means that Lord Sri Ram is the only one who can liberate the soul from the torments and miseries that it faces in this world. No one can provide the soul peace and happiness except the Lord, and it is foolish to hope to attain this spiritual destiny without the grace and blessing of the Lord. Therefore, it is wise and prudent to seek shelter with Lord Ram, and no one else. This sentiment is elaborated upon in the next verse no. 104.]

Seek shelter only at the holy feet of Lord Śrī Rāma

(103)

यह बिनती रघुबीर गुसाईं ।
 और आस-बिस्वास-भरोसो, हरौ जीव-जड़ताई ॥1॥
 चहाँ न सुगति, सुमति, संपति कछु, रिधि-सिधि, बिपुल बड़ाई ।
 हेतु-रहित अनुराग राम-पद बढै अनुदिन अधिकाई ॥2॥
 कुटिल करम लै जाहिं मोहि जहँ जहँ अपनी बरिआई ।
 तहँ तहँ जनि छिन छोह छौड़ियो, कमठ-अंडकी नाई ॥3॥
 या जगमें जहँ लागि या तनुकी प्रीति प्रतीति सगाई ।
 ते सब तुलसिदास प्रभु ही सों होहिं सिमिति इक ठाई ॥4॥

(103)

yaha binatī raghubīra gusā'īm.
 aura āsa-bisvāsa-bharōsō, harau jīva-jarātā'ī. 1.
 cahaur̥m na sugati, sumati, sampati kachu, ridhi-sidhi, bipula barā'ī.
 hētu-rahita anurāga rāma-pada barhai anudina adhikā'ī. 2.
 kuṭila karama lai jāhim̐ mōhi jaham̐ jaham̐ apanī bari'ā'ī.
 taham̐ taham̐ jani china chōha chām̐diyō, kamaṭha-aṇḍakī nā'īm. 3.
 yā jagamēm̐ jaham̐ lagi yā tanukī prīti pratīti sagā'ī.
 tē saba tulasidāsa prabhu hī sōm̐ hōhim̐ simiṭi ika ṭhā'īm. 4.

Verse no. 103—Oh Lord Raghubīra (Sri Ram)! Oh my Lord (gusā'īm)! I pray to you (yaha binatī) to remove the foolishness of my mind and the false hope, belief and reliance that I may have on other means for attaining liberation and deliverance for myself by the virtue of the grossness of my intellect and wisdom, because I am, after

all, a gross and a lowly creature (aura āsa-bisvāsa-bharōsō, harau jīva-jarātāṁ)¹ (1).

[¹Refer to verse no. 102, stanza no. 5 herein above. The scriptures, i.e. the Vedas, have prescribed a number of ways and means by practicing which a creature can attain liberation and deliverance. These paths have been briefly referred to in verse no. 97, stanza no. 2; and verse no. 98, stanza no. 6.

Then there are so many Gods too to whom one prays for grant of grace and freedom from sufferings. But all these Gods are selfish: they would provide some temporary relief but extract their own share of offerings in return. Nothing is done free!

Therefore, Tulsidas says that one is so foolish that he prays to so many Gods and relies upon his own abilities to attain freedom from his sufferings, or obtain his ultimate spiritual goal of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. This is not a wise thing to do. Rather, a person should rely upon Lord Ram's grace, mercy, compassion, love and affection for all his needs, both temporal and spiritual, for the Lord is so nice and obliging that he goes a step forward to help his devotee attain whatever the latter wishes to attain. And the Lord does it without any obligations and expecting anything in return.

There are countless Gods and Goddesses who can grant specific boons, but they are only like different ministers and governors of the world appointed by the Sovereign of this creation known as the Supreme Being, whose manifested form is Lord Ram. Just as any minister or governor has limited powers, these gods and goddesses too have limited authority.

A person can think that since the scriptures say that if someone does meritorious and good deeds then he will definitely be rewarded and get his desired spiritual objective, but it is easy said than done. It is because the life in this world is a very complicated affair, and one is bound to commit some error here or there unwittingly and unknowingly which would raise its ugly hood at the time of taking stock of the deeds done by him in his life. The creature might be unaware of these misdeeds done inadvertently by him, but he cannot escape their punishment. This means that perfection in deeds is impossible with a gross body that has to live and interact with an equally gross world.

The creature does not live in isolation on an island of perfection and a world of utopia, for the world is full of faults, evils and delusions, and it is impossible to hope to rely on the strength of merely good deeds to attain salvation and deliverance.

Therefore obviously, it is stupidity to expect one's spiritual well-being by relying on these three methods cited in this stanza. So Tulsidas asks Lord Ram to remove this delusory concept from his mind that he can find freedom from the horrors of the world and the cycle of birth and death by relying on these three above mentioned methods for they are ineffective in practice.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram! I have no desire whatsoever to attain an exalted fate and stature (cahaum na sugati), nor do I want to have excellent wisdom, intellect and knowledge (sumati), nor any kind of wealth and prosperity (sampati kachu), or any sort of worldly achievements, successes and boons (ridhi-sidhi) that would give me

great fame and powers, nor do I wish to have praise and honour in this world (bipula barā'ī).

I only wish that my abiding, eternal and pure love and devotion towards your holy lotus feet should be selfless (hētu-rahita anurāga rāma-pada), and it should go on increasing day and night in many-fold ways, without diminishing a bit (barhai anudina adhikā'ī).

[To wit, true devotee does not want anything except deep and steady faith, devotion, love and affection for his Lord.] (2).

In whichever womb I am forcefully made to enter (i.e. in whatever form I have to take a re-birth) by virtue of the consequences of the bad deeds that I do in my life (as they decide my fate) (kuṭila karama lai jāhiṁ mōhi jaham' jaham' apanī bari'ā'ī), I pray thee, oh Lord—do not forsake me even for a moment very much like a tortoise which never abandons its eggs (taham' taham' jani china chōha chāmḍiyō, kamaṭha-aṇḍakī nā'īm)² (3).

[²Stanza nos. 2-3 exemplify Tulsidas' humbleness and devotion for his beloved Lord Ram. This great saintly soul wants nothing from Lord Ram, except love and devotion for him! In this, Tulsidas has shown his clever wit, for on the one hand he has proved himself to be humble, devoted to the Lord, and one who has no worldly desires, which are noble traits of saints and those who are eligible for attaining salvation and deliverance, and on the other hand he has made Lord Ram uneasy because now the Lord would be obliged to wonder what he can do for Tulsidas as the latter has not asked for anything from the Lord, though the Lord's promise is well known that he does not allow anyone who comes to him to go back empty-handed.

In Ram Charit Manas there is an incident narrated where the saintly crow Kaagbhusund had done the same thing: when he approached Lord Ram and the Lord asked him to seek any boon or thing he wished for, Kaagbhusund said he wanted nothing but devotion for the Lord. Lord Ram had tried to test his wisdom and determination by asking Kaagbhusund to seek anything else, but when this saintly crow insisted that he wants nothing else but devotion, then the Lord had himself praised him and his choice, saying that he appreciates it exceedingly, and that henceforth Kaagbhusund will be bestowed with all the benefits that come naturally and automatically by having the Lord's grace even though he had not asked for them specifically. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Doha no. 83—to Doha no. 85.

In the present case, Tulsidas has put Lord Ram in a piquant situation: had he asked for something, the Lord would have gladly granted it to him, and this grant would have freed the Lord from his obligation towards Tulsidas, for the Lord could tell the world that he has fully granted what Tulsidas whatever he wanted, and would have thus managed to preserve his reputation of fulfilling all the wishes of everyone who had sought anything from the Lord. But since Tulsidas wants nothing, it becomes obligatory for Lord Ram to grant him all that which is in the Lord's power, and this grant would be no mean thing as the Lord is the Supreme Being himself.]

Oh Lord (prabhu! Whatever relations of love, faith and kinship that I may have in this world with this body (such as with wife, son, family etc.; “yā jagamēm jaham'

lagi yā tanukī prīti pratīti sagā'ī")—well, all of them should be concentrated into a focal point for Tulsidas, and that should be you (tē saba tulasidāsa prabhu hī sōm hōhim simitī ika ṭhā'īm)!

[To wit, please create a situation where my only kith and kin, my only relation, and my only friend and companion is Lord Ram, and no one else. Why? So that all my affection and love and devotion can be exclusively directed at you, can be focussed on you, without any distraction or diversion of any kind, whether real or imaginary.] (4).

Rāma is my only Lord

(104)

जानकी—जीवनकी बलि जैहौं ।
चित कहै रामसीय—पद परिहरि अब न कहूँ चलि जैहौं ॥1॥
उपजी उर प्रतीति सपनेहुँ सुख, प्रभु—पद—बिमुख न पैहौं ।
मन समेत या तनके बासिन्ह, इहै सिखावन दैहौं ॥2॥
श्रवननि और कथा नहिं सुनिहौं, रसना और न गैहौं ।
रोकिहौं नयन बिलोकत औरहिं, सीस ईस ही नैहौं ॥3॥
नातो—नेह नाथसों करि सब नातो—नेह बहैहौं ।
यह छर भार ताहि तुलसी जग जाको दास कहैहौं ॥4॥

(104)

jānakī-jīvanakī bali jaihaum̐.
cita kahai rāmasīya-pada parihari aba na kahūṁ'cali jaihaum̐. 1.
upajī ura pratīti sapanēhum̐ sukha, prabhu-pada-bimukha na paihaum̐.
mana samēta yā tanakē bāsinha, ihai sikhāvana daihaum̐. 2.
śravanani aura kathā nahim̐ sunihaum̐, rasanā aura na gaihaum̐.
rōkihaum̐ nayana bilōkata aurahim̐, sīsa īsa hī naihaum̐. 3.
nātō-nēha nāthasōm̐ kari saba nātō-nēha bahaihaum̐.
yaha chara bhāra tāhi tulasī jaga jākō dāsa kahaihaum̐. 4.

Verse no. 104—I sacrifice myself ("bali jaihaum̐"; i.e. offer myself sincerely, humbly, completely, and with gratitude) to Lord Ram who is also the dear Lord of Janki (Sita) (jānakī-jīvanakī).

My Mana (mind and heart) advises me that I should not abandon the holy feet of 'Sita-Ram' (cita kahai rāmasīya-pada parihari) to seek shelter and refuge anywhere else (aba na kahūṁ'cali jaihaum̐). (1).

My heart is convinced (upajī ura pratīti) that I shall not find peace, tranquility, succour and happiness in my life anywhere else, even in my dreams, except at the feet of my Lord Sri Ram (sapanēhum̐ sukha, prabhu-pada-bimukha na paihaum̐).

Therefore, I shall advice my mind and all my sense organs as well as my inner

self (i.e. my Atma; my soul) accordingly (mana samēta yā tanakē bāsinha, ihai sikhāvana daihaum)¹. (2).

[¹I have deduced that my welfare and good lies in surrendering at the holy feet of Lord Ram and take shelter there, and no where else. So I will advise my mind, my heart, my soul and my body with its organs of perception and action to follow my instructions and focus their attention on Lord Ram without being distracted by the world and false assurances.]

I will not listen to anything else (śravanani aura kathā nahim sunihaum), will not talk about anyone else (rasanā aura na gaihaum), will prevent my eyes from wandering anywhere else in this world seeking any better source for my happiness and peace (rōkihaum nayana bilōkata aurahim), and I will bow my head to the Lord only and nowhere else (sīsa īsa hī naihaum). (3).

Now that I have decided to establish an affectionate relationship with my Lord and begin to love and adore him (nātō-nēha nāthasōm kari), I shall snap ties with all others (saba nātō-nēha bahaihaum).

When I shall be called a servant of a particular Lord (which in my case is Lord Ram; “tulasī jaga jākō dāsa kahaihaum”), then the burden of all my deeds (i.e. whatso I do) shall also lie on that Lord (yaha chara bhāra tāhi)². (4).

[²This is because a servant follows the orders of his master. If the servant does anything wrong, then it is the duty and responsibility of his master to punish him and not overlook his misdeeds. This ensures that the servant is kindly treated, because the punishment would also be toned down by the master as he would not like to hurt his devoted servant. But if the same misdeed is to be punished by someone else, the punishment would be harsher. Besides this safety net, the other thing is that the master of the house is responsible for whatever happens in his household; he cannot deny his responsibility. So the master of the house is equally to be held responsible for any misdeeds done by any member of his household in public. It is incumbent upon the lord of the house to teach discipline, good habits and order to his subordinates.

In other words, Tulsidas says that once he has surrendered himself at the feet of Lord Ram and accepted his fellowship or rather ‘servant-ship’, the responsibility of all his deeds and whatever he does in life is to be equally shared by his Lord, Sri Ram.

Henceforth, the Lord will be responsible for keeping Tulsidas’ faith, for the reward or punishment that Tulsidas should get for his deeds, and to ensure his general good, welfare and well-being. Now Tulsidas’ headache is over!]

Lord Rāma’s Holy Name is like the Gem called Cintāmaṇī

(105)

अबलौ नसानी, अब न नसैहौं ।
 राम—कृपा भव—निसा सिरानी, जागे फिरि न डसैहौं ॥1॥
 पायेउँ नाम चारु चिंतामनि, उर कर तें न खसैहौं ।
 स्यामरूप सुचि रुचिर कसौटी, चित कंचनहिं कसैहौं ॥2॥
 परबस जानि हँस्यो इन इंद्रिन, निज बस है न हँसैहौं ।
 मन मधुकर पनकै तुलसी रघुपति—पद—कमल बसैहौं ॥3॥

(105)

abalaum̐ nasānī, aba na nasaihaum̐.

rāma-kṛpā bhava-nisā sirānī, jāgē phiri na ḍasaihaum̐. 1.

pāyē'um̐ nāma cāru cintāmani, ura kara tēm̐ na khasaihaum̐.

syāmarūpa suci rucira kasautī, cita kañcanahim̐ kasaihaum̐. 2.

parabasa jāni ham̐syō ina indrina, nija basa hvai na ham̐saihaum̐.

mana madhukara panakai tulasī raghupati-pada-kamala basaihaum̐. 3.

Verse no. 105—This life has been in vain and wasted till now (*abalaum̐ nasānī*), but now onwards I will not let it go in vain (*aba na nasaihaum̐*).

By the mercy and grace of Lord Sri Ram (*rāma-kṛpā*), the world and its delusions in the form of a dark night has passed away (i.e. I have woken up from this delusory, materialistic, false and illusionary world; “*bhava-nisā sirānī*”).

Now that I have woken up (i.e. now that I have realised the delusory nature of the world and the futility of pursuing it and pleasing it), I will not spread the mattress of delusions once again and allow myself to be bitten by its (i.e. I shall not fall in the trap of the delusory and mirage-like world again and allow myself to suffer any longer; “*jāgē phiri na ḍasaihaum̐*”). (1).

I have found a beautiful ‘Chintamani’¹ gem called Sri Ram's holy Name (*pāyē'um̐ nāma cāru cintāmani*).

I shall never let it fall from the grasp of the hands of my heart (*ura kara tēm̐ na khasaihaum̐*). [To wit, I shall remember Lord Sri Ram constantly in my heart and shall guard this gem by chanting his name all through my life.]

Indeed and surely, I shall test the purity of the gold representing my mind and intellect (*cita kañcanahim̐ kasaihaum̐*) against the touchstone of Sri Ram's pure, beautiful and dark countenance (*syāmarūpa suci rucira kasautī*) [That is to say, I shall watch whether or not my mind is constantly focussed on the divine form of Lord Ram, and whether it remembers the Lord at all times.] (2).

[¹The ‘*Cintāmani*’ is a rare gem that possesses mystical powers to remove the worries, worldly as well as spiritual, of the person who has it in his possession.

Here, Tulsidas means that since he has the holy and divine Name of Lord Sri Ram as his precious possession, he has nothing to worry about, either in this world or in the world hereafter. And like a person, who by his good fortune, manages to have such a rare and priceless gem, he too would take all precautions to guard this gem that symbolizes Lord Ram's holy Name and its exceptional spiritual powers.]

As long as I was subjugated by (i.e. was servile to) the sense organs, they made me dance to their tunes and made a foolish clown of me (i.e. they made fun of me; “*parabasa jāni ham̐syō ina indrina*”), but now that I am free of them, I am in control of myself, I shall not let myself be subjected to derision and jest by these sense organs who had exploited me for so long by falling prey to temptations of the world and its sense objects (*nija basa hvai na ham̐saihaum̐*)².

Tulsidas says: ‘I shall now willfully and diligently divert my mind-like bee to the lotus feet of Lord Sri Ram (*mana madhukara panakai tulasī raghupati-pada-kamala basaihaum̐*).’ [To wit, I shall not allow my mind to wander anywhere, and ensure that it stays focused on the holy feet of my Lord Sri Ram.] (3).

[²It is the sense organs of the body of an individual that forces him to be attracted to the world as these organs seek gratification from their respective objects in this world. This creates a smoke-screen whereby the creature thinks that he can find happiness and peace and fulfilment by pursuing the world. But once wisdom and realisation dawns upon the mental horizon of the person and he understands that it is a trap for him, he would turn his mind away from all this, and instead focus it on reality that would give him lasting peace and happiness.]

[Note—This verse is extremely popular.]

The Lowly made Holy by Lord Śrī Rāma

Rāga Rāmakalī

(106)

महाराज रामादस्यो धन्य सोई ।
 गरुअ, गुनरासि, सरबग्य, सुकृती, सूर, सील—निधि, साधु तेहि सम न कोई ।।1।।
 उपल—केवट—कीस—भालु—निसिचर—सबरि—गीध सम—दम—दया—दान—हीने ।
 नाम लिये राम किये परम पावन सकल, नर तरत तिनके गुनगान कीने ।।2।।
 ब्याध अपराधकी साध राखी कहा, पिंगलै कौन मति भगति भेई ।
 कौन धौं सोमजाजी अजामिल अधम, कौन गजराज धौं बाजपेयी ।।3।।
 पांडु—सुत, गोपिका, बिदुर, कुबरी, सबरि, सुद्ध किये सुद्धता लेस कैसो ।
 प्रेम लखि कृस्न किये आपने तिनहुँको, सुजस संसार हरिहरको जैसो ।।4।।
 कोल, खस, भील, जवनादि खल राम कहि, नीच है ऊँच पद को न पायो ।
 दीन—दुख—दवन श्रीरवन करुना—भवन, पतित—पावन बिरद बेद गायो ।।5।।
 मंदमति, कुटिल, खल—तिलक तुलसी सरिस, भो न तिहुँ लोक तिहुँ काल कोऊ ।
 नामकी कानि पहिचानि पन आपनो, ग्रसित कलि—ब्याल राख्यो सरन सोऊ ।।6।।

(106)

mahārāja rāmādaryō dhan'ya sō'ī.
 garu'a, gunarāsi, sarabagya, sukṛtī, sūra, sīla-nidhi, sādhu tēhi sama na kō'ī.
 1.
 upala-kēvaṭa-kīsa-bhālu-nisicara-sabari-gīdha sama-dama-dayā-dāna-hīnē.
 nāma liyē rāma kiyē parama pāvana sakala, nara tarata tinakē gunagāna
 kīnē. 2.
 byādha aparādhakī sādha rākhī kahā, piṅgalai kauna mati bhagati bhē'ī.
 kauna dhaurṁ sōmajājī ajāmila adhama, kauna gazarāja dhaurṁ bājapēyī. 3.
 pāṇḍu-suta, gōpikā, bidura, kubārī, sabari, sud'dha kiye sud'dhatā lēsa kaisō.
 prēma lakhi kṛṣṇa kiye āpanē tinahum'kō, sujasa sansāra hariharakō jaisō. 4.
 kōla, khasa, bhīla, javanādi khala rāma kahi, nīca hvai ūm'ca pada kō na pāyō.
 dīna-dukha-davana śrīravana karunā-bhavana, patita-pāvana birada bēda
 gāyō. 5.
 mandamati, kuṭila, khala-tilaka tulasī sarisa, bhō na tihum' lōka tihum' kāla kō'ū.

nāmakī kāni pahicāni pana āpanō,grasita kali-byāla rākhyō sarana sō'ū. 6.

Verse no. 106—He, who has been praised and given respect by the great Lord Sri Ram, is worthy of all reverence, glory, honour, adulation and exaltedness (mahārāja rāmādaryō dhan'ya sō'ī).

He alone is worthy, is famed with immensity of glory and is a person who seriously matters (garu'a), he is a treasury of virtues and eclectic qualities (gunarāsi), is all-knowing and all-aware (sarabagya), is righteous, meritorious and scrupulous (sukṛtī), is brave and courageous (sūra), is a treasury of the virtues of courteousness, politeness, good manners and civility (sīla-nidhi), and is deemed to be pious and saintly (sādhu)—indeed, there is no one comparable to him anywhere (tēhi sama na kō'ī). (1).

[After praising such a fortunate person whom Lord Ram has accepted, Tulsidas now cites specific examples from the story of the Ramayan to show that the characters in the story who were blessed by the Lord had gained universal acclaim and respect, and had become famous in the realm of history as the ones who were extremely fortunate and privileged to have obtained liberation and deliverance from the miseries of life, and had attained an exalted and honourable stature for themselves, albeit they had done nothing special to deserve it. The important point to note in this context is that all of them had a physical body that was lowly, that cannot be regarded as belonging to some high caste or a noble family, and none of them would normally have expected to find freedom from the fetters of fate to which their destiny had tied them. But all of them attained a stature that was the envy of great sages and hermits who practice stern vows and undertake so much trouble for their spiritual welfare, but rarely attain it, at least not as easily as these fortunate souls.

Tulsidas highlights Lord Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse. There are other similar verses in this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where the same examples are given to highlight Lord Ram's excellent nature and reputation. See verse nos. 239-241.]

Ahilya in the form of a stone, Nishad (the boatman), monkey (Sugriv), bear (Jamvant), demons (Vibhishan), Sabari (the old Bhil woman), Jatayu (the vulture)¹—verily, all of them were totally lacking in the virtues of equanimity, tranquility, control over senses, tolerance, forbearance, mercy, compassion, kindness, charity etc. (“sama-dama-dayā-dāna-hīnē”).

[To wit, these virtues are regarded as auspicious and noble, and they are deemed to be essential for one's spiritual welfare. But all the fellows cited here had a lowly body, and they had done nothing worthwhile or meritorious which would give them the reward that comes with possessing these virtues.]

But merely by the dint of remembering Lord Sri Ram's holy Name, the kind and gracious Lord had made all of them so holy, so exalted and so pure (nāma liyē rāma kiyē parama pāvana sakala) that even today one can cross the ocean-like world by singing their glories and virtues (nara tarata tinakē gunagāna kīnē). (2).

[¹See note at the end of this verse.]

Which sinful and evil deed did the cruel hunter-cum-bandit Valmiki not do, and what sinful and evil wish did he not have (byādha aparādhakī sādha rākhi kahā)? [But

he attained an exalted stature and became highly honoured as a revered sage because he had done Japa, or repetition, of Lord Ram's holy Name, and that too in the reverse order. Valmiki had repeated Lord Ram's holy Name in the reverse order as "MARA" instead of as "RAM". But still the benefits he got were unparalleled. His story is narrated in verse no. 57 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

When did the prostitute named Pinglā (also known as 'Ganikā') divert her intellect and wisdom to worship and have devotion for the Lord (that she would be entitled to attain liberation and deliverance from her sinful life) (piṅgalai kauna mati bhagati bhēī)? [But still the gracious Lord Krishna had given her the honour which was the envy of all. Her story is briefly narrated in verse no. 94, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

Which Som Yagya (the fire sacrifice in which the patron God is the Moon) did the sinner Ajamil perform (kauna dhaurṁ sōmajājī ajāmila adhamā)? And which Ashwamegh Yagya (horse sacrifice) was Gaja (the elephant) planning to do (kauna gazarāja dhaurṁ bājapēyī)? [To wit, neither of them did any fire sacrifice, or for that matter any worthwhile meritorious deed in their lives which would make them eligible for liberation and deliverance from the horrors of a painful death. It was only on the strength of the holy Name of the Lord that both found eternal peace. The stories of Ajamil and Gaja are narrated in verse no. 57 of this book.] (3).

Where was there even a trace of purity, holiness and faultlessness in the Pandavas², the Gopis (cowherd maids of Vrindavan), Bidur, the hunchback known as Kubari (a maid of Kansha), and Sabari³? But you had purified them all (pāṇḍu-suta, gōpikā, bidura, kubarī, sabarī, sud'dha kiyē sud'dhatā lēsa kaisō).

Lord Krishna had accepted them all, the Pandavas², the Gopis, Bidur and Kubari, just because the Lord had sensed and seen that they had immense love and affection for him (prēma lakhi kṛṣṇa kiyē āpanē tinahumkō), (and of course Sabari was blessed by you, Lord Ram, for the same reason).

As a result of which their fame had spread throughout the world, and they have got honour and respect like that given to Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva (sujasa sansāra hariharakō jaisō). (4).

[²This idea is reiterated clearly once again in verse no. 239, stanza no. 2 of this Book Vinai Patrika.

³See note at the end of this verse.]

Among the Kols, Khas, Bhil, Yavans etc. (i.e. all the tribals and savages, or the uncivilised sections of society), which wretched one has not obtained an exalted state from a lowly one merely on the strength of uttering your name 'Ram' (kōla, khasa, bhīla, javanādi khala rāma kahi, nīca hvai ūmca pada kō na pāyō)?

The Vedas have sung the glories of Lord Sri Ram (birada bēda gāyō) as being the Lord who is the destroyer of sorrows of the oppressed, the deprived, the downtrodden, the humble, the lowly, the helpless and the hapless (dīna-dukhadavana), as being the Lord of Laxmi, the goddess of prosperity, wealth, material well-being and fulfilment of all worldly needs and desires (śrīravana), as being an abode of mercy, kindness and compassion (karunā-bhavana), and as being the Lord who purifies the sinners, the vile ones and those who are maligned, lowly, downtrodden and wretched (patita-pāvana). (5).

[Forget about others, look at me, says Tulsidas :-] There has been no one as stupid, of a low intellect, a miscreant, rascal, cruel, scheming and a more wicked fellow (mandamati, kuṭila, khala-tilaka) than me, Tulsidas (tulasī sarisa), in the three worlds and all the three eras of time (past, present, future) (bhō na tihum' lōka tihum' kāla kō'ū).

But in order to uphold the dignity and glory of his holy Name and keeping in mind his vow to purify the sinners and the evil ones (nāmakī kāni pahicāni pana āpanō), Lord Sri Ram has given shelter (refuge) to even this fellow (Tulsidas) who has been bitten by the Kaliyug-like serpent (grasita kali-byāla rākhyō sarana sō'ū)⁴. (6).

[⁴To wit, Tulsidas says—“Why should one cite the examples cited by me in this verse, or why should one go any further than me to understand how kind, gracious, benevolent, merciful and compassionate Lord Ram is. For, look at me: I am the most humble and lowly human one will ever find in the whole world; I have all the faults and weaknesses one associates with the present corrupt era known as Kaliyug. But inspite of these grave shortcomings and flaws in me, Lord Ram has been so kind and merciful upon me that I, who was sinful and utterly wretched, who would have found difficulty to even feed my hungry stomach if destiny and fate had their own way, has become a respected man, a man who is praised and raised to a high pedestal of being recognised as a poet of repute, a devotee par-excellence, and a wise and learned man. Say, to whom should I give the credit for my honour and well-being if it is not to Lord Ram?”

In this context, refer verse nos. 75, 76 and 79 herein above of this book.]

[Note—¹The story of ‘Ahilya’ is narrated in verse no. 43; that of ‘Sugriv’ in verse no. 134; that of ‘Vibhishan’ in verse no. 78; and that of ‘Jatau’ the vulture in verse no. 57 of this book Vanai Patrika.

‘Jamvant’ was the chief of the bears and a companion of Sugriv. He and his army of bears had played an important role in the campaign of Lanka.

‘Kewat’ or ‘Nishad’ was a boatman, a community considered of low birth and fish-eaters. He had taken Lord Ram across the river Ganges when the Lord had left Ayodhya and was on his way to the forest to honour the command of his father. Kewat had washed the Lord’s holy feet before allowing him to board his wooden boat, and after taking the Lord on the other side of the river had not taken any charge.

The story goes that Kewat had refused to take Sri Ram across the river Ganges if he was not allowed to wash the dust off the feet of Sri Ram because he feared that the dust could turn his wooden boat into some woman as it had the potent of turning even a stone into a lady, alluding to the liberation of Ahilya. Moved by his simple but strong resolve, his pure devotion that was without pretensions, Lord Sri Ram had allowed him to do so, thereby liberating him along with his family from the cycle of birth and death.

Forsooth, Lord Ram felt so highly obliged of Kewat that he not only promised him friendship for life in this world but also salvation and emancipation after his physical death. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, (i) Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precede Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 20.

The story of ‘Sabari’: She was a tribal woman belonging to the forest tribe called Bhil. She had developed affection and devotion for the Lord because of regular service that she had been doing for sage Matang. She had developed the greatest of yearning for the Lord, and when she was very old, Sri Ram visited her hermitage

while wandering in the forest in search of Sita. He ate sour plums offered by her, praising their sweetness. Thereafter, Sabari left her mortal coils (this body) by the fire of Yoga (self-kindled fire) and her last rites were performed by Sri Ram himself, giving her the exalted and supreme stature of his own mother. This story is narrated in the epic Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36; and Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 17.

²The story of 'Bidur': Bidur was the son of a maid servant but had great devotion for Sri Krishna, hence considered of a low birth. He was a saintly person by nature, and Lord Krishna had treated him as his friend. Throughout his life, Bidur had observed the laws of Dharma (i.e. a righteous and moral way of life). He is credited with scripting a book on ethics, known as 'Bidur-Niti' which he preached to Dhirtraastra (refer: Mahabharat, Udyoga Parva, Chapters 33-40). This treatise has been regarded as a classic on ethics and morality.

When Sri Krishna went to Hastinapur to meet Duryodhan, he stayed with Bidur. When he went at his household, the latter was away, so his wife welcomed Krishna and offered him refreshments in the form of bananas. She was so overwhelmed with joy at having Sri Krishna as her guest that she lost awareness of everything, and peeled the bananas and gave the peeled skin to Krishna while throwing away the pulp of the fruit. Sri Krishna ate the skin with relish to oblige and keep the sanctity of her devotion for the Lord.

The story of 'Kubari' (the hunchback): She was a maid of Kansha. When Sri Krishna was going to the court of Kansha, she presented him with sandalwood (Chandan) paste and asked the Lord to pay her a visit at her home. While returning after slaying Kansha, Sri Krishna had accepted her invitation and paid her a visit, where she worshipped the Lord.

Another Kubari appears in Ram's story as the made of Kaikeyi. Her name was Manthara, and she was the main spoil-sport in Ram's coronation, and the chief instigator of Kaikeyi, prevailing upon her to demand from her husband king Dasrath that her son Bharat is declared as the prince-regent of the kingdom of Ayodhya, and Lord Ram be sent to forest exile. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 12—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 23.]

The Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma

Rāga Bihāga/Bilāvala

(107)

है नीको मेरो देवता कोसलपति राम ।
 सुभग सरोरुह लोचन, सुठि सुंदर स्याम ॥1॥
 सिय-समेत सोहत सदा छबि अमित अनंग ।
 भुज बिसाल सर धनु धरे, कटि चारु निषंग ॥2॥
 बलि-पूजा चाहत नहीं, चाहत एक प्रीति ।
 सुमिरत ही मानै भलो, पावन सब रीति ॥3॥
 देहि सकल सुख, दुख दहै, आरत-जन-बंधु ।

गुन गहि, अघ-औगुन हरै, अस करुनासिंधु ।।4।।
 देस-काल-पूरन सदा बद बेद पुरान ।
 सबको प्रभु, सबमें बसै, सबकी गति जान ।।5।।
 को करि कोटिक कामना, पूजै बहु देव ।
 तुलसिदास तेहि सेइये, संकर जेहि सेव ।।6।।

(107)

hai nīkō mērō dēvatā kōsalapati rāma.
 subhaga sarōruha lōcana, suṭhi sundara syāma. 1.
 siya-samēta sōhata sadā chabi amita anaṅga.
 bhuja bisāla sara dhanu dharē, kaṭi cāru niṣaṅga. 2.
 bali-pūjā cāhata nahīm, cāhata ēka prīti.
 sumirata hī mānai bhalō, pāvana saba rīti. 3.
 dēhi sakala sukha, dukha dahai, ārata-jana-bandhu.
 guna gahi, agha-auguna harai, asa karunāsindhu. 4.
 dēsa-kāla-pūrana sadā bada bēda purāna.
 sabakō prabhu, sabamērṁ basai, sabakī gati jāna. 5.
 kō kari kōṭika kāmanā, pūjai bahu dēva.
 tulasidāsa tēhi sē'iyē, saṅkara jēhi sēva. 6.

Verse no. 107—The Lord of Kaushal (Ayodhya), Lord Sri Ram, is my best, most revered and exalted deity, my Lord God (hai nīkō mērō dēvatā kōsalapati rāma).

He has beautiful lotus-like eyes (subhaga sarōruha lōcana), and a body which is dark complexioned and most handsome (suṭhi sundara syāma) (1).

He always looks magnificent alongside Sita (his divine consort) (siya-samēta sōhata sadā).

His charming and beautiful image is comparable to numerous Kamdeos (the patron god of beauty, charm and attractiveness) (chabi amita anaṅga).

He holds a bow and arrow in his long and sturdy arms (bhuja bisāla sara dhanu dharē), and he looks attractive with a quiver tied around his waist (kaṭi cāru niṣaṅga) (2).

The Lord does not want or expect anyone to offer any kind of (animal) sacrifices or formality of ritualistic worship to please and honour him (bali-pūjā cāhata nahīm), but the only thing that he wants and expects is 'love and affection' (cāhata ēka prīti).

He becomes pleased as soon as one merely remembers him (sumirata hī mānai bhalō), and in return he purifies that person in all possible ways, and frees him from all his worries (pāvana saba rīti) (3).

He bestows all types of happiness, joy and delight (dēhi sakala sukha), and burns to ashes all sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations (of his devotees, and those who remember him, surrender before him and seek refuge with him) (dukha dahai).

He is a true friend of the distressed and the sorrowful (*ārata-jana-bandhu*). Verily and without gainsay, Lord Ram is such an ocean of compassion and mercy that he (*asa karunāsindhu*) accepts their virtues and whatever goodness they have as a reason for his accepting them (*guna gahi*), and in return removes their vices, faults, shortcomings etc. (*agha-auguna harai*).

[To wit, Lord Ram is so merciful and gracious that he picks up the smallest good that his devotee has as a basis of accepting him and providing his protection to him. The Lord overlooks the devotee's innumerable shortcomings, faults and weaknesses. But once accepted, the Lord ensures that this devotee is purified and all his worldly faults are removed as far as possible. 'As far as possible'—because the Lord will be helpless if this fellow willingly reverts to his old crooked ways inspite of the Lord forgiving him for his earlier misdeeds and sins. Say, what would you say of a person who willingly throws away a priceless gem he has been granted, inspite of being told of its worth? Is he not utterly stupid and unfortunate?] (4).

The Vedas and the Purans (i.e. all the ancient scriptures) assert that the Lord is always complete and self-sustained in all the phases and planes of creation (the past, the future and the present) (*dēsa-kāla-pūrana sadā bada bēda purāna*).

Indeed, he is the Lord of all who resides in the hearts of all living beings as their Atma or pure conscious soul (*sabakō prabhu, sabamēm basai*). And therefore, the Lord is all-knowing and omniscient, i.e. he is aware of the inner thoughts of all the creatures, and nothing remains hidden or secret from him (*sabakī gati jāna*). [To wit, one cannot cheat the Lord.] (5).

Who would abandon such a Lord and instead worship numerous other Gods with myriad hopes and expectations in one's mind? (*kō kari kōṭika kāmanā, pūjai bahu dēva*).

[The same idea is expressed in verse no. 104 herein above in this book Vinai Patrika.]

Oh Tulsidas! I should serve only the one (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) who is served by the Lord Shiva himself (*tulasidāsa tēhi sē'iyē, saṅkara jēhi sēva*).

[Lord Shiva is regarded as the Lord of all Gods, the most enlightened amongst the Gods. That is why Shiva is honoured by the title of "Mahadeo" which means a 'Great God'. So, since Lord Shiva has chosen to worship Lord Ram over any other deity, then surely there must be some wisdom in this choice. I am an ordinary man, and I don't have the resources available to Lord Shiva to determine which God to worship. So therefore it makes sense for me to follow the path shown by Shiva himself—which is to worship Lord Ram solely.] (6).

How to worship Lord Rāma by a symbolic Fire Sacrifice

(108)

बीर महा अवराधिये, साधे सिधि होय।
सकल काम पूरन करै, जानै सब कोय॥१॥

बेगि, बिलंब न कीजिये लीजै उपदेस ।
 बीज महामंत्र जपिये सोई, जो जपत महेस ।।2।।
 प्रेम—बारि—तरपन भलो, घृत सहज सनेहु ।
 संसय—समिध, अग्नि छमा, ममता—बलि देहु ।।3।।
 अघ—उचाटि, मन बस करै, मारै मद—मार ।
 आकरषै सुख—संपदा—संतोष—बिचार ।।4।।
 जिन्ह यहि भाँति भजन कियो, मिले रघुपति ताहि ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभुपथ चढ्यौ, जौ लेहु निबाहि ।।5।।

(108)

bīra mahā avarādhiyē, sādhe sidhi hōya.
 sakala kāmā pūrana karai, jānai saba kōya. 1.
 bēgi, bilamba na kījiyē lījai upadēsa.
 bīja mahāmantra japiyē sō'ī, jō japata mahēsa. 2.
 prēma-bāri-tarapana bhalō, ghr̥ta sahaja sanēhu.
 sansaya-samidha, agini chamā, mamatā-bali dēhu. 3.
 agha-ucāṭi, mana basa karai, mārai mada-māra.
 ākaraṣai sukha-sampadā-santōṣa-bicāra. 4.
 jinha yahi bhām̐ti bhajana kiyō, milē raghupati tāhi.
 tulasidāsa prabhupatha caḍhyau, jau lēhu nibāhi. 5.

Verse no. 108—One should worship the most brave, the gallant and the valiant Lord of Ayodhya (Lord Ram) (bīra mahā avarādhiyē), invoking whom (or relying upon whom) everything is achievable, accessible and possible in this world (sādhe sidhi hōya). In all sooth and without gainsay, the Lord fulfills all the wishes of the seeker (sakala kāmā pūrana karai), and everyone knows about this (jānai saba kōya) (1).

One should not delay in implementing this advice (because good things are better done as soon as possible, lest the devil may create some nuisance) (bēgi, bilamba na kījiyē).

[Now, the steps that should be taken for worshipping Lord Ram in a formal way are being described.]

One should first accept the basic and essential 'Great Mantra of Lord Ram'¹ from a true and attained Guru (a moral preceptor) (lījai upadēsa. bīja mahāmantra)², and chant it constantly with faith and conviction. Verily, this Mantra is the same holy and divine Mantra that it is repeated constantly by Lord Shiva himself (japiyē sō'ī, jō japata mahēsa)³ (2).

[¹The 'Mantra' is a spiritual formula consisting of one or more letters or syllables, or even words and phrases, that relate to the cosmic dynamic energy and spiritual powers of the deity to which they pertain. Each deity has its unique formula, and by invoking this formula the worshipper is able to harness that particular deity's cosmic powers which are inherent in that Mantra.

The 'basic or essential Mantra' is called a "Beej Mantra" or the seed Mantra. It is so named because just like a huge tree has its origin in a small seed, or lies hidden in a small seed which is miniscule in comparison to the size of the grown-up tree, the

Beej Mantra encapsulates or encrypts all the magnificent and stupendous powers and dynamism of the chosen deity in one letter or syllable.

Even as one is rewarded with a huge tree that bears fruits and flowers if he is able to properly sow the seed and nourish it, the Beej Mantra of a deity can also give immense rewards if it is used in the correct way and with due care.

For practical purposes, in the case of Lord Ram, this great Mantra is pronounced as “Raam” (Rām), which incidentally happens to be the Lord’s divine Name. Hence, by remembering Lord Ram with this knowledge, one is also automatically and subtly invoking the stupendous spiritual and dynamic powers inherent in the Beej Mantra of the Lord.

The glory, the significance, the importance and the value of Lord Ram’s holy Name, which also happens to be his Beej Mantra, has been elaborately detailed in Tulsidas’ epic book ‘Ram Charit Manas’, in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28.

This subject of Lord Ram’s ‘Beej Mantra’ as being a great vehicle for one’s spiritual welfare and powerful enough to provide liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation to the creature, is the theme of a great Upanishad titled ‘Ram Tapini Upanishad’ which belongs to the Atharva Veda tradition. This Upanishad has been published by this author as part of his book ‘Lord Ram’s Upanishads’ which has been published separately alongside this present book.

²The Guru’s guidance is important as he would advise the proper way to do Japa (repetition of a holy Mantra) and avoid all the pitfalls that an aspirant may encounter in his spiritual journey towards attaining his goal.

³Lord Shiva worships Lord Ram as his only revered Lord, and repeats the Great Mantra of Lord Ram constantly. It is on the strength of the holy Name of Lord Ram that Shiva grants liberation and deliverance to the soul of a dying person on the banks of the holy river Ganges at Kashi. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19.]

[Enumerating the symbolic process of ritualistic Havan or fire-sacrifice following the chanting of the holy Mantra, Tulsidas advises the following process :-]

The best way to do ‘ablution and oblation’ during this symbolic sacrifice (as part of worshipping the Lord) is by using the water of love and devotion for Lord Ram (prēma-bāri-tarapana bhalō).

The offering of Ghee (clarified butter of cow’s milk) to this fire sacrifice is by way of having natural and unadulterated affection for the Lord (ghṛta sahaja sanēhu).

The offering of ‘Samidha’ (items such as fire wood and other offerings that are used as offering during a fire sacrifice) is represented by all sorts of doubts and confusions a worshipper may have (sansaya-samidha).

The sacred Fire is symbolised by practicing the virtue of forgiveness (agini chamā).

The negative traits such as having attachment, infatuation and entanglement (with the world, in its sensual pleasures, and its material things) should be offered as the ritualistic ‘sacrifice’ in this symbolic worshipping process of the Lord (mamatā-bali dēhu)⁴ (3).

[⁴This stanza outlines the main steps involved in doing a fire sacrifice to please a revered God and seek his blessings. There are four basic steps outlined here: (i) first there is using water for ablution and oblation, (ii) next, Ghee is used to offer the first offerings to the sacred fire, (iii) then fire wood and other items, known as

Samidha, are offered to the fire, (iv) and finally a sacrifice is offered. The ‘sacred fire’ burns all these things that are offered to it.

In this symbolic fire sacrifice offered to Lord Ram, it will be noted, an attempt is made to cleanse the inner self of the worshipper and purify him. The sacred fire is represented here by the virtue of ‘forgiveness’, and it is easy to understand why. If one learns to forgive others, there will be no reason why he would be angry at them, no reason for ill-will and malice, and no reason for loss of peace of mind and heartburn. The whole world would become a friendly place, and all its inhabitants would become loving. From the perspective of metaphysical thought, it will be like seeing Lord Ram’s loving and compassionate form everywhere, in all living beings. This will surely bring immense peace and happiness. What more would a person want in this world if he lives in an environment that is heavenly.

One should renounce all his attachments with this material world and the temptations of its sense objects by symbolically sacrificing or willingly letting go of them during this worship of Lord Ram. All doubts and confusions should be likewise removed as they create obstacles and hinders the growth of devotion, faith and conviction.

Having natural love and affection for the Lord is likened to Ghee (clarified butter) because these qualities are sweet, smooth, pleasant, endearing and likeable. Love and affection can win over even the sternest of hearts in favour of a person who practices them.

And just like plain and simple but clean water is the best way to wash one’s self with or offer as a welcoming refreshment to a honoured guest, love and affection is the best way to show respect to Lord Ram; it is the simplest and the only thing the Lord desires and expects from his devotee when he comes to the latter upon his request.]

[A person does a fire sacrifice with some aim and objective in mind which he wants fulfilled, or some accomplishment that he wants to achieve. So now, Tulsidas lists some of the good qualities one is expected to develop inside him if he can be said to have been successful in doing this symbolic fire sacrifice. Otherwise, the effort was as good as wasted.

In other words, the development of the virtues listed in the following stanza is the reward of worshipping Lord Ram from practical point of view, and by extension it would pave the way for the aspirant to attain his spiritual objective because it can only be attained by purification of the inner self first and foremost.]

The sins should be erased or washed away (*agha-ucāṭi*); the mind should be put under leash and abandon its fickle, wayward and vagrant nature (*mana basa karai*); the ego, haughtiness, arrogance, pride, vanity and desires, the lust and passion that one may have till now should be destroyed or eliminated (*mārai mada-māra*); and the treasure that gives happiness and joy, which is symbolised by the virtues of contentedness, wisdom and truthful knowledge, should be ‘attracted’ (sought and accumulated) (*ākaraṣai sukha-sampadā-santōṣa-bicāra*) (4).

Forsooth, those who have worshipped and adored Lord Sri Ram in this prescribed way, have found him without doubt (*jinha yahi bhāmṭi bhajana kiyō, milē raghupati tāhi*).

Tulsidas has also embarked on this path (*tulasidāsa prabhupatha caḍhyau*), and hopes that Lord Sri Ram would see him through (*jau lēhu nibāhi*).

[Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to give him success in his efforts to find salvation through worship and veneration of the Lord by using this path of worship as outlined in this verse, and requests the Lord to help him and prevent him from faltering in his spiritual pursuit.] (5).

Prayer

(109)

कस न करहु करुना हरे! दुखहरन मुरारि!
 त्रिबिधताप-संदेह-सोक-संसय-भय-हारि ।।1।।
 इक कलिकाल-जनित मल, मतिमंद, मलिन-मन।
 तेहिपर प्रभु नहिं कर सँभार, केहि भाँति जियै जन।।2।।
 सब प्रकार समरथ प्रभो, मैं सब बिधि दीन।
 यह जिय जानि द्रवौ नहीं, मैं करम-बिहीन।।3।।
 भ्रमत अनेक जोनि, रघुपति, पति आन न मोरे।
 दुख-सुख सहौं, रहौं सदा सरनागत तोरे।।4।।
 तो सम देव न कोउ कृपालु, समुझौं मनमोहीं।
 तुलसिदास हरि तोषिये, सो साधन नाहीं।।5।।

(109)

kasa na karahu karunā harē! dukhaharana murāri!
 tribidhatāpa-sandēha-sōka-sansaya-bhaya-hāri . 1.
 ika kalikāla-janita mala, matimanda, malina-mana.
 tēhipara prabhu nahim kara sam̐bhāra, kēhi bhām̐ti jiyai jana. 2.
 saba prakāra samaratha prabhō, mair̐m saba bidhi dīna.
 yaha jiya jāni dravau nahīm, mair̐m karama-bihīna. 3.
 bhramata anēka jōni, raghupati, pati āna na mōrē.
 dukha-sukha sahaur̐m, rahaur̐m sadā saranāgata tōrē. 4.
 tō sama dēva na kō'u kṛpālu, samujhaur̐m manamām̐hīm.
 tulasidāsa hari tōṣiyē, sō sādhana nāhīm. 5.

Verse no. 109—Oh Hari (harē)¹! Oh Murari (murāri)²! (If) You are the renowned Lord who is famed as being an eliminator of sorrows, miseries and troubles (dukhaharana), then why don't you show mercy and compassion towards me (kasa na karahu karunā)?

You are the Lord who eliminates (hāri) the horrors caused due to the three Traitaps (Adhibhautik, Adidaivik, Adhyatmik)³ that torment a creature (tribidhatāpa), as well as the doubts, sorrows, grief, confusions, bewilderments, and fears of all types that haunt and overwhelm him continuously (sandēha-sōka-sansaya-bhaya)?⁴ [Then, why don't you do it for me; why don't you free me from these horrors?] (1).

[¹Hari = the Lord who steals or rather eliminates all the problems of his devotees.

²Murari=slayer of demon Mur; i.e., Lord Vishnu.

³Refer: Verse no. 68, stanza no. 1; and verse no. 73, stanza no. 4.

⁴This paragraph can be interpreted as follows also: “You are the Lord who removes (hāri) the three types of torments known as the Traitap (tribidhatāpa) that create immense amount of doubt, sorrow, confusion and fear (sandēha-sōka-sansaya-bhaya) for a creature during his life.”]

On the one hand (ika), my mind and wisdom have lost their bearings and have been darkened (i.e. are stained, maligned, corrupted) by the sins, evils and vices that are caused by the negative effects of Kaliyug, the present era in which I have to live, the era where negativities are dominant and override all goodness (kalikāla-janita mala, matimanda, malina-mana), and on the other hand you are also not taking care of me and it appears that you seem to have neglected me or turned away from me because I am so sinful that I am not worthy of your attention (tēhipara prabhu nahim kara sambhāra).

Say oh Lord, how then would this servant spend his life and live reasonably comfortably (kēhi bhāmṭi jiyai jana)?⁵ (2).

[⁵Here, Tulsidas politely admonishes his dear Lord Ram, saying to effect that though he, Tulsidas, is sinful and not entirely pure and pious as expected by the Lord, but then this is the reputation and greatness of the Lord that he accepts even such people and transforms them into good people who would be worthy of him and become eligible for obtaining peace, happiness, freedom from all spiritual bondage, and attain salvation. If this is true, then why is that the Lord neglecting Tulsidas? He earnestly asks his Lord Ram to live up to the Lord’s famed reputation and provide help to Tulsidas, especially when he begs for it and is earnest in his request, ready for transformation and redemption. Refer also to verse no. 112 herein below.]

Oh Lord (prabhō)! You are capable in all respects and able in all the ways (saba prakāra samaratha), while I am most humble, hapless, helpless, poor and lowly in every imaginable way (mairṁ saba bidhi dīna).

In spite of knowing this, you do not show kindness, compassion and mercy on me (yaha jiya jāni dravau nahim), which shows (or proves) that I am luckless and unfortunate to the extreme (mairṁ karama-bihīna). [But oh Lord, you forget that this is exactly what makes you so famous—that people like me are redeemed by you, they are transformed from being evil into one who are worthy of spiritual happiness and joy by your grace and kindness, and their soul saved from further demotion. So, oh kind Lord, have mercy upon me!] (3).

Oh Raghupati (i.e. the Lord of king Raghu’s line; Sri Ram)! I have come here (in this life as a human being with the name of ‘Tulsidas’) after wandering aimlessly in many wombs (i.e. after countless previous births where I had assumed myriad forms as different types of creatures) (bhramata anēka jōni), but I have found no Lord except you whom I can call ‘my Lord’ (pati āna na mōrē).

[To wit, I hadn’t a benevolent and loving Lord like you in any of my past lives, nor do I have anyone whom I call my dear Lord in this present life, and neither do I hope to have one in the future. Of course, there were lords of all sorts and denominations—but they were all selfish, only my ‘lord’ as long as I served them like a slave and fulfilled their wants and needs. None had ever bothered about my own needs and welfare. But oh dear Lord Ram; you are totally different; you care for all

your dependants and devotees, as well as those who are troubled and seek refuge with you, who surrender themselves at your holy feet. And you lift them up from the quagmire of this horrifying cycle of transmigration, and grant them happiness and peace; and the icing of the cake is that you not only do so selflessly but do not want anyone to feel obliged to you for your grace and benevolence. Your mercy and grace comes absolutely without any strings attached. Tell me anyone, where is such a Lord in this creation as Lord Ram?]

So oh Lord, it is my most earnest desire that I should always remain at your feet to serve you (*rahaum sadā saranāgata tōrē*), whether I have to suffer sorrows, miseries and troubles, or enjoy happiness and pleasant circumstances as a consequence (*dukha-sukha sahaum*); I am prepared for both but do not wish to leave you and go anywhere else, no matter what happens⁶ (4).

[⁶Do you know why? Because throughout the journey of my soul during countless lives and births, I have never met or even heard of such a kind and loving Lord as you are. So whatever be written in my destiny, whether I find peace or not, I will never, repeat ‘never’, leave you and your holy feet, no matter what comes and goes, to seek shelter any where else. Perish the idea! For one, at least I am sure that you will not kick me out or treat me roughly, nor will you drag me to the prison of hell because I am of no use to you and am unnecessarily bothering you. Rather, and I am sure of this going by what I have heard about your nature and temperament as lauded in the scriptures, you will not take long to take notice of my plight and have pity on me. But of course, I must have patience, like you have had with me for so long by subtly and silently taking care of me in thick and thin even from behind my back so that I may not even know who is helping me, by feeding my hungry stomach with bread though I am good for nothing, by fending off my worldly tormentors, and by not throwing me to hellish sufferings that I may have had to encounter in this very life had it not been for your secret help and love for me inspite of your being aware of my shortcomings, defects and flaws. I knew that it was you who was helping me during all my troubles, tribulations and sufferings, helping me to tide over the storm which would have otherwise drowned me. I know it Lord; I know it!

Refer also to verse no. 112, stanza no. 4 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.]

In my mind and heart (“Mana”) I fully realise and understand (*samujhaum manamāmḥīm*) that in all sooth and without the least gainsay I do not have any other Lord who is as merciful, compassionate and graceful as you are (*tō sama dēva na kō'u krpālu*).

But oh Hari, this Tulsidas dose not have the means and the wherewithal by which he can please you (i.e. you will have to be pleased with me inspite of all my shortcomings and faults, and be kind to me without any my having to take the recourse of formalities and rituals and other spiritual practices that are ordinarily thought to be necessary to please the Lord God simply because I can’t do them) (*tulasidāsa hari tōṣiyē, sō sādhana nāhīm*).

[Tulsidas says that he cannot trust his soul and his welfare with anyone except Lord Ram.] (5).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse. His determination to stick to his faith in Lord Ram as the “Redeemer and the only Lord” is also reflected in earlier verses, especially verse nos. 101—108 herein above, and verse no. 110 that follows below.]

Prayer – Full of Tulasīdās' Humility

(110)

कहु केहि कहिय कृपानिधे! भव-जनित बिपति अति।
 इंद्रिय सकल बिकल सदा, निज निज सुभाउ रति॥1॥
 जे सुख-संपति, सरग-नरग संतत सँग लागी।
 हरि! परिहरि सोइ जतन करत मन मोर अभागी॥2॥
 मैं अति दीन, दयालु देव सुनि मन अनुरागे।
 जो न द्रवहु रघुबीर धीर, दुख काहे न लागे॥3॥
 जद्यपि मैं अपराध-भवन, दुख-समन मुरारे।
 तुलसिदास कहँ आस यहै बहु पतित उधारे॥4॥

(110)

kahu kēhi kahiya kṛpānidhē! bhava-janita bipati ati.
 indriya sakala bikala sadā, nija nija subhā'u rati. 1.
 jē sukha-sampati, saraga-naraga santata samṅa lāgī.
 hari! parihari sō'i jatana karata mana mōra abhāgī. 2.
 mair̥m ati dīna, dayālu dēva suni mana anurāgē.
 jō na dravahu raghubīra dhīra, dukha kāhē na lāgē. 3.
 jadyapi mair̥m aparādha-bhavana, dukha-samana murārē.
 tulasidāsa kham'āsa yahai bahu patita udhārē. 4.

Verse no. 110—Oh Lord who is a treasury of mercy and grace (kṛpānidhē)! Where else should I go and tell about the immense troubles and miseries that have been generated for me by this world, except in front of you (kahu kēhi kahiya bhava-janita bipati ati)¹?

All the sense organs of my body (indriya sakala) are infatuated with, engrossed in and attached to their respective objects in this material world (nija nija subhā'u rati), and are always extremely agitated due to this attachment and infatuation (bikala sadā) (1).

[¹Tulsidas explains to Lord Ram why he has been bothering the latter and nagging at him by talking incessantly about his own problems, as done in verse no. 109 for instance. He wonders who will listen to him and his miseries patiently and with the same compassion and empathy as shown by Lord Ram. That is why Tulsidas mourns before the Lord about his pitiful condition—for he knows very well that Lord Ram is so merciful and kind that not only will he give him a patient hearing but would also take necessary action to mitigate his sufferings.]

They (the senses) remain always trapped in the web of worries, doubts, consternations and uncertainties pertaining to worldly pleasures and wealth, as well as about heaven and hell, which cause immense bewilderment to me (jē sukha-sampati, saraga-naraga santata samṅa lāgī).

But oh Hari, the irony is that this unfortunate mind of mine (*hari! -- mana mōra abhāgī*) has betrayed me by distancing itself from you (and in the process compelling me also to forget you), and instead, it follows the instructions of these sense organs (and forces me to follow suit) (*parihari sō'i jatana karata*)² (2).

[²To wit, my mind knows that this world and its attractions will never give peace and happiness. But the mystery is that still it is unable to control my sense organs which go after the temptations and charms offered by the material world of sense objects. Why can't my foolish mind realise the trap it is allowing itself to fall into? Why can't my mind divert itself to having devotion, love, faith and affection for you, at least with the same intensity with which it loves the deluding world?]

Oh Lord (*dēva*)! I am extremely distressed, sorrowful, miserable and dejected, feeling hapless and helpless, and am in a very pitiable state (*mairṁ ati dīna*). Hearing about you as the Lord who is extremely compassionate, merciful, munificent and benevolent, I have found encouragement and reassurance, and have somehow prevailed upon my wayward mind to develop affection for you and have faith in you (*dayālu dēva suni mana anurāgē*).

Inspite of this (i.e. in spite of my best of efforts to rein in my mind and oppose the will of my sense organs which try to pull me away from you and push me towards the world), oh Lord Raghubir (Ram) who is so patient, accommodating and tolerant with his devotees (*raghubīra dhīra*), if you do not show kindness and mercy upon me and empathise with me (*jō na dravahu*), why will it not cause a lot of agony and anguish in me (*dukha kāhē na lāgē*)?³ (3).

[³Here, Tulsidas tells his beloved Lord Ram that in spite of formidable odds he has strived hard to turn his mind away from the temptations of the world, and instead focus on the Lord by developing devotion and faith in him, and prevailing upon his mind to see its own good and welfare in seeking refuge with the Lord. Tulsidas says that he has done his bit, so it is incumbent upon the Lord to do his bit now. The Lord should now ensure that his faithful devotee, follower and servant Tulsidas is taken well care of, and all his worldly as spiritual sufferings are dispelled, and he is granted eternal peace and happiness that the Lord promises all his devotees irrespective of their past.]

Truely and agreeably, though I am an abode (i.e. am full) of vices, shortcomings, evil tendencies and faults (*jadyapi mairṁ aparādha-bhavana*), but oh Murari, you are reputed to be the one who destroys such sorrows, troubles and tribulations that are caused to the creature because of the many sins, vices and faults that he has (*dukha-samana murārē*)⁴.

This humble fellow Tulsidas has this expectation from you (that you will eliminate all his miseries and sorrows, and redeem him) (*tulasidāsa kham' āsa yahai*) because you have provided liberation and deliverance, salvation and emancipation to numerous other sinners and wretched creatures uptill now (*bahu patita udhārē*). [So surely enough, oh Lord, you will give salvation and liberation from this mundane, illusionary and tormenting world to me as well.] (4).

[⁴To his credit, Tulsidas does not deny that he has his own share of unholy characters just like other ordinary living beings; he does not pretend to be a saint and a pious man. So what; after all the Lord's reputation is based precisely on this premise—that those who are sinful and fallen but have taken refuge with the Lord are

surely given freedom from all sufferings, are uplifted and saved. So therefore, Tulsidas expects the same from Lord Ram for himself!]

Delusory Creation

(111)

केसव! कहि न जाइ का कहिये ।
 देखत तव रचना बिचित्र हरि! समुझि मनहिं मन रहिये ॥1॥
 सून्य भीति पर चित्र, रंग नहिं, तनु बिनु लिखा चितेरे ।
 धोये मिटइ न मरइ भीति, दुख पाइय एहि तनु हेरे ॥2॥
 रबिकर—नीर बसै अति दारुन मकर रूप तेहि माहीं ।
 बदन—हीन सो ग्रसै चराचर, पान करन जे जाहीं ॥3॥
 कोउ कह सत्य, झूठ कह कोऊ, जुगल प्रबल कोउ मानै ।
 तुलसिदास परिहरै तीन भ्रम, सो आपन पहिचानै ॥4॥

(111)

kēsava! kahi na jā'i kā kahiyē.
 dēkhata tava racanā bicitra hari! samujhi manahim̐ mana rahiyē. 1.
 sūn'ya bhīti para citra, raṅga nahim̐, tanu binu likhā citērē.
 dhōyē miṭa'i na mara'i bhīti, dukha pā'iya ēhi tanu hērē. 2.
 rabikara-nīra basai ati dārūna makara rūpa tēhi māhīm̐.
 badana-hīna sō grasai carācara, pāna karana jē jāhīm̐. 3.
 kō'u kaha satya, jhūṭha kaha kō'ū, jugala prabala kō'u mānai.
 tulasidāsa pariharai tīna bhrama, sō āpana pahicānai. 4.

Verse no. 111—Oh Kēsava (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu, whose incarnation was Lord Ram)! I don't know what to say? There is nothing I can say (kahi na jā'i kā kahiyē). Oh Hari (again, one of the countless names of Lord Vishnu)! I wonder and marvel at this mysterious and wonderful creation of yours, and considering it as an extremely fascinating and most wonderful delusion created by you, I prefer to keep quiet (as it is beyond my comprehension) (dēkhata tava racanā bicitra hari! samujhi manahim̐ mana rahiyē) (1).

What a marvellous and exceptional miracle is this—for, this creation-like painting (or picture) has been painted on the illusionary wall of 'nothingness' (sūn'ya bhīti para citra) by a 'formless' painter ("tanu binu likhā citērē"—here referring to Brahm, the Supreme Being, the Lord of creation) without using any paint (or any brush for that matter, and done by a mere wish of the Lord) (raṅga nahim̐).

(An ordinary painting can be washed-off or it would fade away with time on its own, but—) This (illusionary) painting created by the Lord cannot be erased or washed-off in anyway (i.e. it is very fast, stable and self-perpetuating; it seems to last forever) (dhōyē miṭa'i na bhīti).

(Further, an ordinary painting is inanimate and lifeless, it has no feelings, so it has no fear of death either, but—) The components of this extraordinary picture are

constantly afraid of ‘death’ though they do not have a physical body or true existence (mara'i bhīti)¹.

[¹To wit, every single entity depicted in this picture is fearfully aware that over time it would be removed or erased to give place to another entity. Though the painting represented by this creation as a whole never seems to fade away or come to a natural end because it rolls on and on endlessly, its components seem to perish every now and then, to give place to newer components. Though the painting seems lifeless because it is simply an imaginary ‘creative painting’ created by the power of the mind of the Lord, it seems alive, real and moving with pulsating life in it.]

(Then again, one feels glad at seeing an ordinary painting, but—) One feels sorrowful and pitiful on looking at this world-like picture with its constant sorrows, miseries, strife, discord, sufferings and torments (where no one seems contented and happy, where all are running an endless rat-race, where constant change which never gives rest and certainty is a common denominator, where joy and pain, peace and discord come in endless waves, one after another) (dukha pā'iyā ēhi tanu hērē) (2).

The world is like the illusion of water that is seen in the rays of the sun during hot days (like in a mirage seen in a hot desert) (rabikara-nīra). In this water is seen a ferocious crocodile (basai ati dārūna makara rūpa tēhi māhīm), which, though having no physical form or actual jaws (badana-hīna), nevertheless gobbles up (sō grasai) all those, whether animate or inanimate (carācara), that go to drink that water (pāna karana jē jāhīm)² (3).

[²Tulsidas says that this world is like that illusionary mirage. Even as a thirsty man runs behind that illusion in search of water and eventually dies of thirst, so does a person who is running aimlessly and in futility behind the illusionary pleasures of this world come to all sorts of frustrations and self-inflicted miseries, and finally devoured by the crocodile representing ‘Kaal’ or death. Just like the water of the mirage goes receding further back from the man running towards it, the charms of the world and the happiness and joy one expects to derive from them go on eluding him and falling farther back from his reach the more he yearns for them, instigating him to run more and more behind them, till at the end he dies not only without achieving anything but also frustrated, restless and unhappy. He has lost whatever peace and happiness he had in his never ending quest for material comfort and pleasures of the world, and his foolish desire to seek happiness and peace in them.]

This world has been variously described as being false, true, or a mixture of both (by votaries of these philosophies and doctrines) (kō'u kaha satya, jhūṭha kaha kō'ū, jugala prabala kō'u mānai). But, according to Tulsidas, all these three descriptions of the world are misleading (tulasidāsa pariharai tīna bhrama).

Those who are free (i.e. have freed themselves) from this useless and endless debate, and consider all that is visible as a playful activity of the Supreme Lord, are the ones who realise the true nature of their ‘self’ as being pure consciousness (sō āpana pahicānai). [And this realisation gives them eternal peace, joy and rest as opposed to trying to find them in the material world.]³ (4).

[³Tulsidas says in essence that wise people are those who do not waste their time, energy and life in pursuing the world in the hope of finding happiness, peace and rest for themselves because they know it is illusionary and created by the Creator just like a painter paints a lively picture using his own creative mind. They know that this world has no pith and substance worth the name in it that would ever give them

some solid benefit of joy and happiness. So they focus on their inner-self known as the Atma, which is pure consciousness, to find these qualities within themselves. Their individual 'consciousness' is the same as the cosmic Consciousness that has created this wonderful world in the first place, only that the former acts and operates at a much grosser level of creation as compared to the latter.

The purity, the intensity and the quality of peace, contentedness, happiness and joy that is experienced by abandoning the rat-race of the world and becoming calm towards all desires and worldly longings is known only by those who have experienced it, but for the rest it is elusive and unthinkable.]

Tulasīdāsa politely & affectionately admonishes Śrī Rāma

(112)

केसव! कारन कौन गुसाई।
 जेहि अपराध असाध जानि मोहिं तजेउ अग्यकी नाई॥1॥
 परम पुनीत संत कोमल-चित, तिनहिं तुमहिं बनि आई।
 तौ कत बिप्र, ब्याध, गनिकहि तारेहु, कछु रही सगाई?॥2॥
 काल, करम, गति अगति जीवकी, सब हरि! हाथ तुम्हारे।
 सोइ कछु करहु, हरहु ममता प्रभु! फिरउँ न तुमहिं बिसारे॥3॥
 जौ तुम तजहु, भजौं न आन प्रभु, यह प्रमान पन मोरे।
 मन-बच-करम नरक-सुरपुर जहँ तहँ रघुबीर निहोरे॥4॥
 जद्यपि नाथ उचित न होत अस, प्रभु सों करौं ढिठाई।
 तुलसिदास सीदत निसिदिन देखत तुम्हारि निदुराई॥5॥

(112)

kēsava! kārana kauna gusā'īm.
 jēhi aparādha asādha jāni mōhim tajē'u agyakī nā'īm. 1.
 parama punita santa kōmala-cita, tinahim tumahim bani ā'īm.
 tau kata bipra, byādha, ganikahi tārēhu, kachu rahī sagā'ī?. 2.
 kāla, karama, gati agati jīvakī, saba hari! hātha tumhārē.
 sō'i kachu karahu, harahu mamatā prabhu! phira'um' na tumahim bisārē. 3.
 jau tuma tajahu, bhajaurm na āna prabhu, yaha pramāna pana mōrē.
 mana-baca-karama naraka-surapura jaham' taham' raghubīra nihōrē. 4.
 jadyapi nātha ucita na hōta asa, prabhu sōm karaurm dhiṭhā'ī.
 tulasidāsa sīdata nisidina dēkhata tumhāri niṭhurā'ī. 5.

Verse no. 112—Oh Kēsava! Oh Lord (gusā'īm)! What is the reason you have become so indifferent to me ("kārana kauna")? What is my fault or crime which is so huge and unpardonable that you decided to abandon me as if I was a complete stranger for you (jēhi aparādha asādha jāni mōhim tajē'u agyakī nā'īm)?¹ (1).

[¹Refer also to verse no. 109, stanza no. 2 which also narrates how Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram not to neglect him, to have pity on him. Refer also to verse no. 113, stanza no. 1 herein below.]

[If you consider me as wicked and an evil fellow, and—] If you accept and provide refuge to only those whose characters and deeds are noble, pure, righteous and scrupulous, and those who are saints of tender hearts (*parama punīta santa kōmalacita, tinahim tumahim bani ā'im*)—then why did you liberate Ajamil, Valmiki and Ganika (*tau kata bipra, byādha, ganikahi tārēhu*)? Did you have any special relationship with them that you showed preference to them (*kachu rahī sagā'i*)? [To wit, if you can liberate them, why not also me?]² (2).

[²Refer: Verse nos. 99 and 106 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.]

Oh Hari (Lord Sri Ram)! The entire fate of this Jiva (the living being; here meaning Tulsidas himself)—his death, deeds, good or bad destiny etc.—are all in your hands (for indeed you are the Lord who controls them and can change the Jiva's destiny if you so wish) (*kāla, karama, gati agati jīvakī, saba hari! hātha tumhārē*).

So oh Lord, be kind upon me to destroy my sense of attachment and enchantment with this world (*sō'i kachu karahu, harahu mamatā prabhu*), and do something so that I do not forget you and wander aimlessly here and there like a vagrant (*phira'um'na tumahim bisārē*). [To wit, please arrange things in such a way that I have steady faith, devotion and affection for you; please ensure that I am able to strictly adhere to this vow of mine, now as well as in the future.]² (3).

[²Tulsidas says that Lord Ram is the supreme Lord of the world who controls the destiny of all living beings. This being so, the Lord should ensure himself that Tulsidas, who has come to seek refuge with him and ask for his help, gets what he expects from such a Great Lord as Ram is, and it is to help him to free himself from the trap of the world and the cycle of transmigration, and instead have abiding devotion in the Lord so that his soul can find lasting peace and happiness as well as freedom from the horrors of the world.]

Even if you do forsake me, even if you neglect me and do not heed my prayers, oh Lord, I would still worship, revere and adore you no matter what comes (*jau tuma tajahu*)—I will never accept someone else as my Lord nor pay my obeisance to anyone except you (*bhajaurm na āna prabhu*).

In all sooth and without gainsay, this is the unwavering and solemn decision that my Mana (heart and mind) has taken (*yaha pramāna pana mōrē*)³.

Oh Lord Raghubīra (Lord Ram)! Wherever you send me—whether in hell or heaven—I would continue to pray to you with my mind, speech and deeds, and I will always look up to you for my welfare and my needs (*mana-baca-karama naraka-surapura jaham'taham'raghubīra nihōrē*) (4).

[³Refer verse no. 109, stanza no. 4 in this context.]

[Affectionately admonishing Sri Ram whom he loves very much, and therefore feels he has the right to speak his feelings to the Lord out in the open, without the fear of punishment or retribution for annoying him in the least by undermining the Lord's authority and dignity, Tulsidas says once again—] Oh Lord! Though it is not proper that I become (or appear to be) stubborn and arrogant before you (*jadyapi nātha ucita na hōta asa, prabhu sōm karaum' dhiṭhā'i*), but considering your continuous negligence of me, your indifference and apathy towards me, and your not paying any heed to my pleas and prayers for mercy that I make every day and night (i.e. it

appears that you have become so indifferent to me that none of my pleas seem to move you even a bit) (*nisidina dēkhata tumhāri niṭhurāṭ*), this Tulsidas feels highly anguished, pained and sorrowful (*tulasidāsa sīdata*).

[To wit, I feel so tormented, distressed and aggrieved under this circumstance that I am constrained to speak my mind and say what I have said herein above—that even if you neglect me, I will keep my faith and stay at your holy feet, for I am sure you are simply testing my integrity and sincerity, and then you will surely redeem me!] (5).

Establishing relationship with God

(113)

माधव! अब न द्रवहु केहि लेखे।
 प्रनतपाल पन तोर, मोर पन जिअहुँ कमलपद देखे॥1॥
 जब लगि मैं न दीन, दयालु तैं, मैं न दास, तैं स्वामी।
 तब लगि जो दुख सहेउँ कहेउँ नहिं, जद्यपि अंतरजामी॥2॥
 तैं उदार, मैं कृपन, पतित मैं, तैं पुनीत, श्रुति गावैं।
 बहुत नात रघुनाथ! तोहि मोहि, अब न तजे बनि आवैं॥3॥
 जनक—जननि, गुरु—बंधु, सुहृद—पति, सब प्रकार हितकारी।
 द्वैतरूप तम—कूप परौं नहिं, अस कछु जतन बिचारी॥4॥
 सुनु अदभ्र करुना बारिजलोचन मोचन भय भारी।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु! तव प्रकास बिनु, संसय टरै न टारी॥5॥

(113)

mādhava! aba na dravahu kēhi lēkhē.
 pranatapāla pana tōra, mōra pana ji'ahum' kamalapada dēkhē. 1.
 jaba lagi mairṁ na dīna, dayālu tairṁ, mairṁ na dāsa, tairṁ svāmī.
 taba lagi jō dukha sahē'um' kahē'um' nahimṁ, jadyapi antarajāmī. 2.
 tairṁ udāra, mairṁ kṛpana, patita mairṁ, tairṁ punīta, śruti gāvai.
 bahuta nāta raghunātha! tōhi mōhi, aba na tajē bani āvai. 3.
 janaka-janani, guru-bandhu, suhṛda-pati, saba prakāra hitakārī.
 dvaitarūpa tama-kūpa paraurṁ nahimṁ, asa kachu jatana bicārī. 4.
 sunu adabhra karunā bārijalōcana mōcana bhaya bhārī.
 tulasidāsa prabhu! tava prakāsa binu, sansaya ṭarai na ṭārī. 5.

Verse no. 113—Oh Lord Mādhava (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu who had revealed himself as Lord Ram)! What is the reason why you do not show your kindness, compassion and graciousness upon me now (even though I have been pleading before you so pitifully and humbly for so long now) (*aba na dravahu kēhi lēkhē*)?

In all sooth, it is your declared vow that you will welcome and take care of all those who come to seek refuge at your holy feet, i.e. those who surrender themselves selflessly before you are sure to get full attention and protection from you

(pranatapāla pana tōra). At the same time, it is my vow also that I will spend my life at your holy lotus-like feet, always looking up to you for all my needs, both worldly and spiritual (mōra pana ji'ahum̐ kamalapada dēkhē)¹ (1).

[¹That is, if I cannot live without the protection of your feet, if I have openly declared my intention of spending my life at your holy feet and serving you to the best of my abilities and not going anywhere else, then tell me oh Lord why don't you show mercy and pity on me, you being so merciful and a protector of your devotees and refugees? You must remember your own vow that you will look after those who have sought refuge with you, that the happiness and welfare of such creatures is your responsibility. This being so, why on earth are you neglecting me who am so humble and who has unconditionally taken shelter with you, who has declared that he has no other Lord except Lord Ram?

Refer also to verse no. 112 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.]

Till the time I had not become humble, pitiable and distressed, and you had not become merciful and benevolent, or I had not become a servant and you my Lord ("jaba lagi mair̐ na dīna, dayālu tair̐, mair̐ na dāsa, tair̐ svāmī"—i.e. till the time a sort of relationship was not established between the two of us, me being your humble servant and you being a gracious and benevolent Lord)—I had not told you the about the countless torments and troubles that I had to suffer from though you must have known them, being all-knowing (taba lagi jō dukha sahē'um̐ kahē'um̐ nahim̐, jadyapi antarajāmī).

[I am saying them now because you are my Lord and Redeemer, and I should, like a faithful and loyal servant and devotee, not hide anything from you. For in all sooth there should be no veil of formality between you and me now onwards.] (2).

But now for sure we both have an established relationship—you are a generous, open-hearted, gracious and magnanimous donor or giver, and I am an abject pauper seeking alms from you (tair̐ udāra, mair̐ krpana); you are the purifier of sinners and those who are evil, I am a sinner, a lowly, downtrodden, deprived and humble person (patita mair̐, tair̐ punīta). Verily indeed, even the Vedas are singing this fact—i.e. even the scriptures endorse my views, and even they declare the same thing about your noble character and gracious nature (śruti gāvai).

Oh Raghunath (Lord Ram)! In this way, we both are related to each other in many ways (bahuta nāta raghunātha tōhi mōhi). Say then, how can you ever even contemplate to abandon me, neglect me and be indifferent to me (, aba na tajē bani āvai)? (3).

[Further telling the Lord about other dimensions of his relationship with him, Tulsidas says—] You are my only father, mother, teacher, brother, friend, Lord and benefactor by all means; you are my well-wisher by all means (janaka-janani, guru-bandhu, suhr̥da-pati, saba prakāra hitakārī).

Hence, think over the matter and do something (asa kachu jatana bicārī) so that I do not fall in the dark and blind well of 'Dwaitya' (the philosophy that talk about the dual nature of God, and which creates a lot of confusion in the mind of the devotee) (dvaitarūpa tama-kūpa paraur̐ nahim̐).

[Oh Lord, grace me that I should not be confused and bewildered by your dual nature of being formed as well as being formless, but find eternal peace by seeing you in the form I know as Lord Ram, an image that grants immense joy and happiness to

the beholder by its captivating beauty, magnificence and charm. Lord, bless me that I remain free from all doubts, delusions and bewilderments. I am not so highly enlightened or have no such mental attainments as to be able to have devotion and love for the Lord whom I cannot visualise or imagine because he is the invisible and formless Lord of the creation. It is thus practical and better for me to know the Lord in the visible form of Lord Ram—the form which ignites spontaneous devotion, love and adoration in my heart, the form that is easily visualised and felt close is far better than the abstract form that is too far and inaccessible for the heart and the mind.] (4).

Oh lotus-eyed Lord (bārijalōcana)! Listen: your measureless graciousness, compassion and mercy can liberate one from the tremendous fear of the ‘Bhava-Sagar’ (the never-ending ocean of birth and death) (sunu adabhra karunā mōcana bhaya bhārī).

Oh Lord of Tulsidas (tulasidāsa prabhu)! The darkness of ignorance and doubts that has engulfed Tulsidas can never be removed without the light of your knowledge and without having your Darshan (divine, holy vision). [So, I beg with you to grant me this sight of yours.] (tava prakāsa binu, sansaya ṭarai na ṭārī) (5).

Tulasīdās’ Humility

(114)

माधव! मो समान जग माहीं ।
 सब बिधि हीन, मलीन, दीन अति, लीन—बिषय कोउ नाहीं ॥1॥
 तुम सम हेतुरहित कृपालु आरत—हित ईस न त्यागी ।
 मैं दुख—सोक—बिकल कृपालु! केहि कारन दया न लागी ॥2॥
 नाहिंन कछु औगुन तुम्हार, अपराध मोर मैं माना ।
 ग्यान—भवन तनु दियेहु नाथ, सोउ पाय न मैं प्रभु जाना ॥3॥
 बेनु करील, श्रीखंड बसंतहि दूषन मृषा लगावै ।
 सार—रहित हत—भाग्य सुरभि, पल्लव सो कहु किमि पावै ॥4॥
 सब प्रकार मैं कठिन, मृदुल हरि, दृढ़ बिचार जिय मोरे ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु मोह—सुखला, छुटिहि तुम्हारे छोरे ॥5॥

(114)

mādhava! mō samāna jaga māhīm.
 saba bidhi hīna, malīna, dīna ati, līna-biṣaya kō'u nāhīm. 1.
 tuma sama hēturahita kṛpālu ārata-hita īsa na tyāgī.
 mair̥m dukha-sōka-bikala kṛpālu! kēhi kārana dayā na lāgī. 2.
 nāhinna kachu auguna tumhāra, aparādha mōra mair̥m mānā.
 gyāna-bhavana tanu diyēhu nātha, sō'u pāya na mair̥m prabhu jānā. 3.
 bēnu karīla, śrīkhaṇḍa basantahi dūṣana mṛṣā lagāvai.
 sāra-rahita hata-bhāgya surabhi, pallava sō kahu kimi pāvai. 4.
 saba prakāra mair̥m kaṭhina, mṛdula hari, dṛṇha bicāra jiya mōrē.
 tulasidāsa prabhu mōha-sṛṅkhalā, chuṭihi tumhārē chōrē. 5.

Verse no. 114—Oh Lord **Mādhava**! There is no one in this world who is like me (**mō samāna jaga māhīm**), there is none who is worse-off than me for lack of resources, someone who is a greater sinner, more humble, lowly, downtrodden, helpless and hapless than me, and someone who is engrossed more in the pleasures of the senses and the desire to gratify them, and who is more attracted to the materialistic world as compared to me (**saba bidhi hīna, malīna, dīna ati, līna-biṣaya kō'u nāhīm**).

[In brief, there is no such person who can be compared to me in as far as spiritual degradation and moral poverty is concerned.] (1).

And there is no other Lord (**īsa**) in this world other than you who selflessly shows greater graciousness, kindness, mercy, compassion and benevolence upon those who are helpless, hapless, humble and distressed (**tuma sama hēturahita kṛpālu ārata-hita**), one who would voluntarily and cheerfully forfeit or relinquish everything else just for the sake of the welfare and well-being of such creatures who are pitiable and wretched (**ārata-hita na tyāgī**)¹.

[¹To wit, oh Lord Ram, you have abandoned Vaikunth or your heavenly abode and have come down to this sinful world just for the sake of your devotees; you have discarded your cosmic, eternally formless, all-pervading, all-encompassing and subtle form to manifest yourself as a human being in this mortal, mundane world just for the benefit of your devotees—what greater sacrifice can anyone else do for those who are devoted to him? Indeed, you have kept the good and the welfare of the humble and the ordinary creatures of the gross world above your own greatness and pleasures so much so that you came down to live with them to share their pain and suffering like an ordinary human being on the one hand, and on the other hand to give them a chance to worship you so closely and find the same degree of happiness, joy and bliss, the same level of freedom from worldly miseries and the hope of redemption as enjoyed by great sages and hermits who are enlightened and self-realised, who have done so many spiritual exercises and have undertaken so many spiritual practices that spiritual joy and deliverance of their soul is there for their asking.]

I am agitated due to sorrows, miseries, troubles, tribulations and torments of various kinds; I am greatly tormented by my sufferings (**maiṁ dukha-sōka-bikala**). Oh merciful, kind-hearted, benevolent and munificent Lord (**kṛpālu**)! For what reason do you not have mercy and compassion for me (**kēhi kārana dayā na lāgī**)?²

[²To wit, despite being so nice, gracious, compassionate and merciful by nature as outlined above, why is it that you are neglecting me? Why is that I still harbour fears of so many kinds? Perhaps it is my own foolishness and ignorance that I don't realise that you who are so kind as to place the pleasure and happiness of your devotees before your own comforts would certainly and surely take care of me, for I unwarrently wail and squirm in my imaginary troubles, forgetting for the time being that my Lord is very watchful and conscious of his duties and responsibilities towards my good. In this context, refer to verse no. 71 of this Book.] (2).

I agree that in this, there is no fault of yours (**nāhinna kachu auguna tumhāra**), and it is due to my own faults, sins and misdeeds that I am suffering so much, and you have preferred to let me do some sort of repentance or penitence for my past sins by momentarily overlooking my pleas for mercy (**aparādha mōra maiṁ mānā**).

It is apparently the case so because, inspite of having received this human body from you (i.e. I became a human being by your grace, because you are the Creator of the world and its Supreme Father), a body which is considered to be a

stepping-stone by which all knowledge and wisdom can be accessed, a body which is a means by which a creature can attain enlightenment, wisdom, spiritualism, liberation, deliveration, emancipation and salvation (*gyāna-bhavana tanu diyēhu nātha*).

But unfortunately I have still not recognised a Lord like you (i.e. I have yet not realised who you actually are; I have not understood your true form as the Redeemer and the Liberator of the Soul, the Lord God of the world, but continue to treat you as a mere prince of Ayodhya whose name is Ram!) (*sō'u pāya na mair̥m prabhu jānā*)³ (3).

[³Put simply, Tulsidas warns the world, albeit through his own example, that a person suffers agony and grief which is of his own making, and then he endlessly blames the Lord God for his pains and sufferings, forgetting that he himself is to be blamed for all his misfortunes. Has he forgotten about his past sins; does he not know that everyone has to bear with what he sows as this is the 'law of Karma in this creation' that one gets what one sows, which the Lord can't change as the Lord is the one who himself has established this code. Of course it is true that the Lord, being the supreme Judge, can certainly reduce the intensity and duration of the punishment due for the sins committed by a person, for the Lord is so eternally merciful and kind that he can even forgive and requite them altogether, but that does not mean one would accuse the Lord for not paying heed to one's prayer. Is it not wrong that one would expect instant relief-on-demand for sins committed over countless births as if the Lord was his servant? So, it will be far better for a creature to have faith in the Lord God and his well-known nature of being merciful and kind, to have patience with the Lord once a creature leaves himself and his fate in the hands of the Lord. Then the Lord will feel it obligatory and incumbent upon himself in line with his own reputation to do something for the creature who has surrendered himself unconditionally before the Lord as the 'ball is now in the Lord's own court' so to say, instead of when the creature wails and accuses the Lord of being stone-hearted and neglecting his prayers, for then the Lord would point out his sins to him and say "what do you say for this long list of sins that you have been carrying on your head over generations".

Remember: Tulsidas was no ordinary person; he was not a sinful man but a saintly and blessed soul who was totally devoted to Lord Ram and had the Lord's unflinching protection upon him. Nay, Tulsidas is not talking about his own personal sufferings when he makes the observations about his miseries in the verses of this Book of Prayers known as 'Vinai Patrika', but he is merely taking the recourse of his own self to highlight the general way in which the creature is suffering in this world out of his own ignorance and delusions. To avoid being called names and being accused of being pretentious by acting as a 'holy cow' as if he is completely above sins and reproach, that he sees only faults in others while pretending to be most righteous and pious himself, he has devised this device of accusing himself first-hand, and placing himself at the top of the list of sinners to advice us all how we should pray most humbly to the Lord, how we should surrender ourselves before the Lord with soulful prayers begging for the Lord's mercy, because that would assure us of the Lord's attention without fail.]

A Bamboo plant and the 'Karil' tree (a thorny leafless shrub) falsely accuse Chandan (sandalwood) and Basant (the spring season) respectively of being unkind to them (*bēnu karīla, śrīkhaṇḍa basantahi dūṣana mṛṣā lagāvai*), forgetting that their own ill-luck and fate are to be blamed for their misfortune (*hata-bhāgya*).

The bamboo has no pith in it (for it is hollow from the inside), so how can it absorb the pleasant scent of the sandalwood tree (*sāra-rahita surabhi*)? Similarly, the ‘Karil’ tree has no leaves on it by its genetic nature, so how can the spring season produce leaves on it and make it laden with foliage like other green trees (*pallava sō kahu kimi pāvai*)?⁴ (4).

[⁴The bamboo grumbles that though it is so close to the sandalwood tree and almost like it, the latter does not let its scent to be shared with the former. The bamboo feels jealous of the sandalwood tree that it does not have the same sort of attractive scent as the latter. But it forgets that while the stem of the sandalwood tree is solid from the inside, that of the bamboo is hollow. How can something that is hollow from within hold and retain any chemical substance inside it that would enable it to emanate a fragrance? But the bamboo accuses the sandalwood instead of realising its own shortcomings.

Similarly, the Karil tree belongs to that family of the plant kingdom which do not have the required genetic code that would leaves. How can then the spring season implant leaves on the stems of the Karil tree like it does on other green trees when it is genetically not destined to have it?

Citing these two examples Tulsidas says that I am wrongfully, out of my own ignorance and delusions and lack of wisdom, accusing my benevolent Lord Ram of not paying heed to me, for I do not know the lot of sins and misdeeds that I have on my head. I do not realise that I myself is to be blamed for all my miseries. I should rather thank the Lord for being so gracious that inspite of my fate decreeing greater horrors and sufferings for me, he has made them so small that I can easily cope with them without much of a problem. Instead of being patience and tolerant, I feel agitated and raise an accusing finger upon the Lord for being stone-hearted. Don’t and won’t I understand that had it not been for the Lord’s mercy, I would have been worse off than what I am today. Refer verse nos. 91—92, and 99 also in this context. I have no right to accuse you of negligence and careless attitude towards me.]

Oh Hari! I am stubborn, head-strong and a hard-nut in every respect (*saba prakāra mair̥ṁ kaṭhina*), but you have a soft heart and a graceful and sweet temperament (*mṛdula hari*). I have made a firm decision in my mind that (*dr̥ṣṭa bicāra jiya mōrē*) the fetters in the form of a chain of delusions and attachments that have shackled me, Tulsidas, for so long (*tulasidāsa prabhu mōha-sṛṅkhalā*) can be broken only if you so wish, for otherwise it is not possible at all (*chuṭiḥi tumhārē chōrē*).

[To wit, there is no other hope or chance of my breaking free from the vicious cycle of birth and death, and obtain liberation from this mundane world of miseries, except by your kindness, grace and compassion. I won’t be able to achieve this spiritual feat if you don’t help me, oh Lord, for I don’t have the wherewithal or the ability or the skill to do so.] (5).

Importance of Wisdom

माधव! मोह-फाँस क्यों टूटै।
 बाहरि कोटि उपाय करिय, अभ्यंतर ग्रन्थि न छूटै॥1॥
 घृतपूरन कराह अंतरगत ससि-प्रतिबिंब दिखावै।
 ईधन अनल लगाय कलपसत, औटत नास न पावै॥2॥
 तरु-कोटर महुँ बस बिहंग तरु काटे मरै न जैसे।
 साधन करिय बिचार-हीन मन सुद्ध होइ नहिँ तैसे॥3॥
 अंतर मलिन बिषय मन अति, तन पावन करिय पखारे।
 मरइ न उरग अनेक जतन बलमीकि बिबिध बिधि मारे॥4॥
 तुलसिदास हरि-गुरु-करुना बिनु बिमल बिबेक न होई।
 बिनु बिबेक संसार-घोर-निधि पार न पावै कोई॥5॥

(115)

mādhava! mōha-phāṃśa kyōm tūṭai.
 bāhari kōṭi upāya kariya, abhyantara granthi na chūṭai. 1.
 ghr̥tapūrana karāha antaragata sasi-pratibimba dikhāvai.
 īndhana anala lagāya kalapasata, auṭata nāsa na pāvai. 2.
 taru-kōṭara maham̐ basa bihaṅga taru kātē marai na jaisē.
 sādhana kariya bicāra-hīna mana sud'dha hō'i nahim̐ taisē. 3.
 antara malina biṣaya mana ati, tana pāvana kariya pakhārē.
 mara'i na uraga anēka jatana balamīki bibidha bidhi mārē. 4.
 tulasidāsa hari-guru-karunā binu bimala bibēka na hōī.
 binu bibēka sansāra-ghōra-nidhi pāra na pāvai kōī. 5.

Verse no. 115—Oh Lord Mādhava! How will this snare and the knot symbolising my attachments with this world and delusions that comes in its wake break? How will I break free from this trap and find liberation? (mōha-phāṃśa kyōm tūṭai)

No matter how many countless external strategies and attempts are made, no matter what outer device is devised by a creature (bāhari kōṭi upāya kariya), the knot of inherent ignorance that grows in one's inner-self cannot be untied so easily, and one cannot break free from this trap except by your grace, oh Lord (abhyantara granthi na chūṭai)¹ (1).

[¹The different attachments and longings that one develops towards this world are like the 'knot' that ties him down to the gross world and its cycle of transmigration. A 'knotted' man is not free; he is tied up in knots. He cannot have the same joy as a man who is free from all shackles.]

The image of the moon that is reflected in a pan filled with Ghee (liquid clarified butter or refined oil—"ghr̥tapūrana karāha antaragata sasi-pratibimba dikhāvai") cannot be removed or obliterated even for 100 Kalpas (i.e. a long period of time) as long as the clarified butter or the oil remains in the pan in spite of boiling it using fuel and fire (īndhana anala lagāya kalapasata, auṭata nāsa na pāvai)² (2).

[²As long as there is oil or liquid clarified butter in the pan, the moon will continue to be reflected in it though one boils the oil or the liquid butter over and over

again. In order to remove the reflection of the moon, it is imperative to get rid of the oil altogether rather than merely attempting to clean it by boiling it.

Likewise, as long as there are worldly attachments, desires, temptations and infatuations that taint the mind and the inner-self, this knot symbolising the endless cycle of birth and death that is tied to the neck of the creature shall not break or end even by the fire and fuel of penances and austerities and other rigorous methods that one may undertake in his attempts to get rid of it. That is to say, one must overcome worldly attachments and temptations before one expects any freedom from the cycle of transmigration and its attendant horrors.]

Like a bird living in a hollow of a tree-trunk cannot die when the tree is cut (because it would fly away from it) (*taru-kōṭara maham̐ basa bihaṅga taru kāṭē marai na jaisē*), the mind cannot be purified, focused and controlled from the inside so as to become rested and attentive towards the spiritual welfare of the creature unless wisdom and enlightenment (about the falsehood of the world, its perishable and delusory nature, and the futility of expecting peace and rest in it) dawns upon the inner-self of the creature (*sādhana kariya bicāra-hīna mana sud'dha hō'i nahim̐ taisē*)³ (3).

[³Here, the numerous temptations and attachments of the world are like the bird which flies from one tree to another if the original tree is cut, and then on to another if the second tree is also cut. That is, merely trying to overcome one or two worldly attachments and longings would not help the creature to control his mind from flying to other temptations. It has to be a holistic approach.

Similarly, mere external efforts such as doing Tapa (austerity and penance done as a routine effort), Yoga (the physical aspect of exercises of meditation), Dhyan (contemplation merely done as a break from the rat-race of routine life) etc. will yield no results till the creature has a determined mind to break free from all attachments with the world of material sense objects and their temptations, to stop expecting any real happiness and peace from this world no matter how great the temptation is. Tapa, Yoga, Dhyan and the rest of the efforts that are directed towards controlling the mind have only a transient benefit unless one's inner-self is purified and controlled by eliminating all attachments with the material world of sense objects.

This realisation or awareness is to attain wisdom and enlightenment, of becoming wise, enlightened and self-realised.]

The mind can never become internally pure due to the darkening and tainting effects of sensual pleasures of the material world inspite of scrubbing the outer body repeatedly to clean it (*antara malina biṣaya mana ati, tana pāvana kariya pakhārē*) just like the case of the serpent that never dies while it is lying safe in its hole in the ground inspite of beating the ground or attempting various other methods to kill it from the outside (*mara'i na uraga anēka jatana balamiki bibidha bidhi mārē*)⁴ (4).

[⁴Tulsidas here chides at the practice of taking ritualistic baths at holy places and rivers in the misplaced belief that such exercises would cleanse one of his sins. No, it will not, for it may clean the physical external surface of the creature's gross body, but his inner self, which is what really matters to him, will remain as dirty as earlier if no attempt is made to clean it of the dirt clinging to it. And what is this 'dirt that clings to the inner-self'? It is symbolised by the numerous spiritual faults that

surround the Atma or the soul of the creature, some of them being listed in this verse itself as being attachments with the world, longing to expect happiness in it, and so on.

So, the real cleaning comes when one cleans one's inner self of all the faults that afflict him and his soul. Mere external washing of the body won't help one's long-term goal in breaking free from the knot of problems that torment him, that create so much inner restlessness and agitation in him like the physical diseases that afflict the gross body and cause so much restlessness to it.]

Tulsidas says that one cannot have enlightenment and wisdom that is of the pure kind, that is free of all confusions, bewilderments and doubts, without the mercy and grace of the Lord God (Hari) and an enlightened teacher (Guru) (tulasidāsa hari-guru-karunā binu bimala bibēka na hō'ī). And, without enlightenment and wisdom, no one can cross-over from this fierce ocean of transmigration (i.e. the cycle of birth and death) in this mundane world (binu bibēka sansāra-ghōra-nidhi pāra na pāvai kō'ī) (5).

Lord's Delusion Creating Powers

(116)

माधव! असि तुम्हारि यह माया ।
 करि उपाय पचि मरिय, तरिय नहिं, जब लागि करहु न दाया ॥1॥
 सुनिय, गुनिय, समुझिय, समुझाइय, दसा हृदय नहिं आवै ।
 जेहि अनुभव बिनु मोहजनित भव दारुन बिपति सतावै ॥2॥
 ब्रह्म-पियूष मधुर सीतल जो पै मन सो रस पावै ।
 तौ कत मृगजल-रूप बिषय कारन निसि-बासर धावै ॥3॥
 जेहिके भवन बिमल चिंतामनि, सो कत काँच बटोरै ।
 सपने परबस परै, जागि देख केहि जाइ निहोरै ॥4॥
 ग्यान-भगति साधन अनेक, सब सत्य, झूठ कछु नाहीं ।
 तुलसिदास हरि-कृपा मिटै भ्रम, यह भरोस मनमार्हीं ॥5॥

(116)

mādhava! asi tumhāri yaha māyā.
 kari upāya paci mariya, tariya nahim, jaba lagi karahu na dāyā. 1.
 suniya, guniya, samujhiya, samujhā'iya, dasā hrdaya nahim āvai.
 jēhi anubhava binu mōhajanita bhava dārūna bipati satāvai. 2.
 brahma-piyūṣa madhur sītala jō pai mana sō rasa pāvai.
 tau kata mrgajala-rūpa biṣaya kārana nisi-bāsara dhāvai. 3.
 jēhikē bhavana bimala cintāmani, sō kata kām̐ca baṭōrai.
 sapanē parabasa parai, jāgi dēkha kēhi jā'i nihōrai. 4.
 gyāna-bhagati sādhanā anēka, saba satya, jhūm̐ṭha kachu nāhīm.
 tulasidāsa hari-krpā miṭai bhrama, yaha bharōsa manamāhīm. 5.

Verse no. 116—Oh Lord **Mādhava**! This power of yours, known as ‘**Maya**’, that creates delusions, is most fascinating and wonderful indeed (**asi tumhāri yaha māyā**)!

Is so intractable and difficult to comprehend and overcome that no matter what effort one makes, how hard one tries and strives to eliminate it (**kari upāya paci mariya**), it is impossible to cross over to the other side of it (“**tariya nahim**”—i.e. it is impossible to overcome it) without the help of your mercy, grace and wish (**jaba lagi karahu na dāyā**).

[Put simply, the effects of Maya can only be overcome and got rid of by the grace and mercy of the Lord upon the creature, and not by making physical efforts, no matter how strenuous they are, or by acquiring wisdom and learning the scriptures.] (1).

I hear about it (**sunīya**), I try to analyse it, I contemplate and ponder upon it (**gunīya**), I try to understand it myself and its effects upon me (**samujhiya**) and also try to make others aware of it (i.e. I teach others about the evil effects of this Maya) (**samujhā'īya**)—but in spite of my best of efforts my heart feels vexed, I still cannot fully or truly comprehend the essential and true nature of your delusory powers known as ‘**Maya**’ and the countless illusions created by it (**dasā hṛdaya nahim āvai**).

And unless one understands its true nature and experiences the horrifying effects of its evil character (**jēhi anubhava binu**), the great troubles and tribulations generated by (originating from) the numerous attachments, infatuations and passions for this world, known as “**mōha**”, would continue to torment the creature, and produce endless anguish, miseries and despair for him (**mōhajanita bhava dārūna bipati satāvai**)¹ (2).

[¹Maya creates a delusion that the world and its material things are for real, that they give real happiness, joy, comfort and peace to the creature, and that one should therefore strive to get the best out of this world for himself if he wants to enjoy life and derive the best of happiness and pleasure from it. This motivates the creature to run madly after the world, pursue it relentlessly, make it his goal in life, become infatuated with its charms and temptations, and get attached to whatever he can acquire as if that thing is exclusively his and a trophy won. He forgets in the process that all that he does and all that he acquires and longs for, or thinks to be most attractive and charming, are all like life lived in one’s dream. This is the effect of Maya—that it creates an illusion of reality when actually there is nothing. And what is the result? Just like a person trying to seek water in a mirage in a hot desert finally ends up all the more thirsty and weakened, a creature running after the world made so real by the influence of Maya becomes more and more frustrated and disenchanted by the passage of time. He loses all hopes of peace, joy and comfort for he was so lusting in the beginning, and whatever peace he has had is now lost in the bargain.]

The nectar of Brahm-realisation (‘**brahma-piyūṣa**’)² is extremely sweet and soothing, it is provider of bliss and tranquility, and it is extremely comforting and nourishing for the soul like honey (**madhur sītala**) is for the body.

In all sooth, if the Mana (mind and heart) has a chance to taste it once somewhere (jō pai mana sō rasa pāvai), why then would it wander aimlessly day and night behind the false mirage-like water of sensual pleasures and objects of this materialistic world (tau kata mrgajala-rūpa biṣaya kārana nisi-bāsara dhāvai)?³ (3).

[²“Brahma-piyūṣa” literally is the nectar of supreme spiritual bliss found when one becomes Brahm-realised, which in effect means to be acquainted with the falsehood of the world and the reality of the Supreme Being in the form of pure Consciousness that is an eternal fount of bliss and beatitude. Further, such a person realises that the world is perishable and a veritable treasury of all sorts of pain and misery, while this Consciousness is just the opposite. The icing on the cake is that this ‘Consciousness’ resides in one’s own self as his Atma or soul, and this realisation provides tranquility to the creature who would discard seeking happiness and joy in the external world of sense objects but rather seek it inside his own inner-self.

Maya is so astounding powerful and potent that it creates a most fascinating and wondrous image of a world that seems extremely charming and wonderful as if there is nothing better than it. The natural tendency of the creature and his sense organs is to seek happiness, pleasure, comfort and joy, and it is therefore attracted to this illusory world. The delusion is so overwhelming that in spite of knowing that all this is mirage-like and unsustainable, the creature still lunges for it head over heel, and then clings to it like it is the end of every endeavour. This is the ‘honey-trap’ of Maya, and like the spider caught in its own web, the creature gets stuck in this delusion for good.

³To wit, the Mana pursues the world because it seeks joy, happiness, bliss, comfort, pleasure and peace in it, but it forgets that whatever it gets in the world is only illusory like the water in the desert mirage. True happiness, peace, bliss and joy rests somewhere else—it rests in Brahm and self realisation. The latter is umpteen times more sweet and refreshing than the former, and lasting as well. So, once the creature’s mind and heart has tasted the nectar of Brahm-realisation, a thing that gives him the experience of true bliss, peace, happiness and joy that are of an abiding nature, he would, naturally and without persuasion, discard the world and its transient charms, and stop running after its material things and pleasures. His condition would be like a prisoner who rushes out of jail to his freedom once he is given a chance.]

If any one has a pure gem known as ‘Cintāmani’ (a miracle gem said to remove worries) in his house (jēhikē bhavana bimala cintāmani), why will he then collect worthless pieces of glass (sō kata kām̐ca baṭōrai)⁴?

While asleep, if one dreams that he has been enslaved by another person (sapanē parabasa parai) and pleads to him to be made free, why would he do so on waking up (jāgi dēkha kēhi jā’i nihōrai)? [Because the illusion of being imprisoned by another person would vanish with the dream itself, and therefore there would be no need to ask anyone to free one’s self.] (4).

[⁴To wit, one who has got the benefit of supreme bliss and tranquility, of eternal happiness and abiding joy, that comes with Brahm-realisation, or the supreme feeling of ecstasy, joy, peace and spiritual bliss that comes with being acquainted with the supreme Consciousness that is eternal and an everlasting abode of these virtues,

why will he then pursue perishable pleasures and illusive charms of the mundane and perishable world that only gives false sense of happiness and joy but is actually a fountainhead of pain, misery and torments?]

There are many means and paths for obtaining salvation and emancipation, for obtaining liberation and deliverance, for attaining spiritual peace and freedom, such as acquiring knowledge, having devotion etc. (*gyāna-bhagati sādhana anēka*), and all are true and effective in themselves, for none is false or futile (*saba satya, jhūmṭha kachu nāhīm*).

But Tulsidas' heart and mind is convinced in his Mana (heart and mind) that ignorance and delusions can only be destroyed by the grace and kindness of Hari (Sri Ram) (*tulasidāsa hari-krpā miṭai bhrama, yaha bharōsa manamāhīm*). [To wit, the grace of Lord God is the best and the foolproof means by which one can achieve true happiness and peace in one's life, and one has only to have extreme faith, belief and total reliance on the Lord for this benefit and privilege to be had.] (5).

Tulasidās' Humility and Simplicity

(117)

हे हरि! कवन दोष तोहिं दीजै ।
 जेहि उपाय सपनेहुँ दुरलभ गति, सोइ निसि—बासर कीजै ॥1॥
 जानत अर्थ अनर्थ—रूप, तमकूप परब यहि लागे ।
 तदपि न तजत स्वान अज खर ज्यों, फिरत बिषय अनुरागे ॥2॥
 भूत—द्रोह कृत मोह—बस्य हित आपन मैं न बिचारो ।
 मद—मत्सर—अभिमान ग्यान—रिपु, इन महँ रहनि अपारो ॥3॥
 बेद—पुरान सुनत समुझत रघुनाथ सकल जगब्यापी ।
 बेधत नहिं श्रीखंड बेनु इव, सारहीन मन पापी ॥4॥
 मैं अपराध—सिंधु करुनाकर! जानत अंतरजामी ।
 तुलसिदास भव—ब्याल—ग्रसित तव सरन उरग—रिपु—गामी ॥5॥

(117)

hē hari! kavana dōṣa tōhim dījai.
 jēhi upāya sapanēhumṁ duralabha gati, sō'i nisi-bāsara kijai. 1.
 jānata artha anartha-rūpa, tamakūpa paraba yahi lāgē.
 tadapi na tajata svāna aja khara jyōm, phirata biṣaya anurāgē. 2.
 bhūta-drōha kṛta mōha-basya hita āpana mairm na bicārō.
 mada-matsara-abhimāna gyāna-ripu, ina mahamṁ rahani apārō. 3.
 bēda-purāna sunata samujhata raghunātha sakala jagabyāpī.
 bēdhata nahim śrīkhaṇḍa bēnu iva, sārahīna mana pāpī. 4.
 mairm aparādha-sindhu karunākara! jānata antarajāmī.

tulasidāsa bhava-byāla-grasita tava sarana uraga-ripu-gāmī. 5.

Verse no. 117—Oh Hari (an address for Lord Ram)! What blame can I put on you (for all the faults are mine, and it would be wrong to blame you for my misfortunes) (kavana dōṣa tōhim dījai)¹?

This is because I allow my self day and night to be engrossed and become indulgent in relentlessly doing all those deeds and things by doing which it is impossible to get salvation and one-ness with the supreme Lord even in one's dream (jēhi upāya sapanēhum duralabha gati, sō'i nisi-bāsara kījai). [This being the case, why should I blame you? I accept that I allow myself to roll in the dirt of the world, and then how wrong it is on my part to say that I am dirty? How wrong it is for me to blame you for my sufferings and misfortunes when I do things that would push me further down the slope, instead of making any effort to pull myself away from this slide? Why should I make you a scapegoat for my own shortcomings and follies?] (1).

[¹Refer verse no. 114, stanza no. 3 herein above in this Book.]

I know that indulgences in the sense organs and longing to gratify them to keep them in good humour, are always the cause of absolute ruin and undesired consequences for the well-being of a person (jānata artha anartha-rūpa), for surely one has to fall in a dark well of ignorance if one gets entangled in them (tamakūpa paraba yahi lāgē).

In spite of this awareness (tadapi), I foolishly become enchanted with the sensual pleasures of this materialistic world and pursue them aimlessly with no desire to abandon them (na tajata -- phirata biṣaya anurāgē) just like a dog, a he-goat and a donkey would (svāna aja khara jyōm)² (2).

[²Here, Tulsidas says that he is as stupid and dumb-witted as the dog, the goat and the donkey for allowing himself in pursuing the external world of material sense objects and remaining indulgent in its material charms in the hope of deriving happiness and comfort from it, instead of seeking a true source of bliss and happiness that comes with surrendering one's self to the Lord God and turning to the inner-self in the search of these virtues.

The 'dog' chews on a piece of dead bone, and thinks that the blood oozing out of its own gums by this effort is coming from the bone. How ridiculous is the false sense of satisfaction this dog has!

Similarly, the 'goat' and the 'donkey' graze on green grass in a meadow, and when they see more greenery ahead they think that they haven't eaten at all, and continue to feel hungry and agitated by hunger, even getting emaciated in the belief that they don't have enough to eat!

The 'he-goat', or the ram, is well fed to fatten it just before its slaughtering. While eating to the extent of bursting its stomach, the ram relishes and gloats at his luck and good fortune that it is getting so much to eat without making any effort to procure food, but it does not realise that the keeper is not being merciful to him by feeding him till its stomach is full, but he is being well-fed and fattened only for its meat, and sooner rather than later it would be slaughtered.

When the ‘donkey’ refuses to move, its owner dangles a piece of carrot hanging from the end of a long stick in the front of its face, and the donkey starts moving forward in the belief that by doing so it would reach the carrot, which it never does as the latter obviously keeps on moving forward with the movement of the donkey.

Tulsidas cites these example to highlight the stupidity of the creatures who are indulgent in the gross world in the belief that they would get happiness in it.]

I create enmity, hostility, animosity and jealousy with other creatures (*bhūta-drōha*) due to ignorance (*kr̥ta mōha-basya*), and do not think of my long-term interests (*hita āpana mair̥ na bicārō*).

I am always engulfed (or surrounded) by and engrossed in arrogance (*ina maham̐ rahani apārō*), haughtiness, hypocrisy, pride, vanity, ego, envy, jealousy etc. which are the enemies of wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment (*mada-matsara-abhimāna gyāna-ripu*). [These negative qualities neutralise whatever positivity is created by having wisdom and knowledge. Say, who is more stupid and deluded than me that I still continue to do it!] (3).

I read, hear and understand from the Vedas and Purans (i.e. the ancient scriptures) (*bēda-purāna sunata samujhata*) that Lord Sri Ram is the all-pervading and omnipresent Lord of the Universe (*raghunātha sakala jagabyāpī*). [This is because the truth of the Lord is not his gross physical body or form that is known to the world as Ram, the prince of Ayodhya, but it is pure and supreme ‘Consciousness’ that is eternal, all-pervading and all-encompassing, an entity that is synonymous with Brahm.]

The irony is that this irrefutable truth, this incontrovertible fact, does not seem to enter my corrupt and sinful mind (*bēdhata nahim̐ -- sārāhina mana pāpī*) even as the scent of sandalwood cannot enter (and be absorbed by) the pith-less stem of the bamboo plant (*bēdhata nahim̐ śrīkhaṇḍa bēnu iva*)³ (4).

[³Refer: Verse no. 114, stanza no. 4 herein above in this connection.]

Oh Lord who is an ocean of compassion and mercy (*sindhu karunākara*)! I am an ocean of huge sins, faults, shortcomings, weaknesses and vices (*mair̥ aparādha-sindhu*). You definitely know this because you are all-knowing and are aware of the inner feelings and thoughts of all living beings (*jānata antarajāmī*).

This Tulsidas, who has been bitten by the serpent-like world (i.e. is overwhelmed with and ensnared by worldly attachments and delusions) (*tulasidāsa bhava-byāla-grasita*) is lying at your holy feet to seek your shelter, refuge, patronage, blessing and protection (*tava sarana*), for you are the Lord who mounts Garud, the heavenly Eagle who is famous as an enemy of serpents (*uraga-ripu-gāmī*).

[Here, Tulsidas alludes to the fact that Lord Vishnu rides on his heavenly mount known as Garud, who is famed for speed and agility as well as his ability to gobble up snakes easily. So he asks the Lord to destroy the serpent-like worldly attachments that have tightly ensnared him by instructing Garud to devour them. In fact, as soon as these serpents would see that Lord Ram is graceful towards Tulsidas,

they would run away on their own fearing the wrath of Garud. Tulsidas asks the Lord to come near him atop his mount Garud so that these serpents free him from their tight grip and run away out of fear for their lives.] (5).

Tulasīdāsa admonishes himself

(118)

हे हरि! कवन जतन सुख मानहु ।
ज्यों गज—दसन तथा मम करनी, सब प्रकार तुम जानहु ॥1॥
जो कछु कहिय करिय भवसागर तरिय बच्छपद जैसे ।
रहनि आन बिधि, कहिय आन, हरिपद—सुख पाइय कैसे ॥2॥
देखत चारु मयूर बयन सुभ बोलि सुधा इव सानी ।
सबिष उरग—आहार, निदुर अस, यह करनी वह बानी ॥3॥
अखिल—जीव—बत्सल, निरमत्सर, चरन—कमल—अनुरागी ।
ते तव प्रिय रघुबीर धीरमति, अतिसय निज—पर—त्यागी ॥4॥
जद्यपि मम औगुन अपार संसार—जोग्य रघुराया ।
तुलसिदास निज गुन बिचारि करुनानिधान करु दाया ॥5॥

(118)

hē hari! kavana jatana sukha mānahu.
jyōm gaja-dasana tathā mama karanī, saba prakāra tuma jānahu. 1.
jō kachu kahiya kariya bhavasāgara tariya bacchapada jaisē.
rahani āna bidhi, kahiya āna, haripada-sukha pā'iya kaisē. 2.
dēkhata cāru mayūra bayana subha bōli sudhā iva sānī.
sabiṣa uraga-āhāra, niṭhura asa, yaha karanī vaha bānī. 3.
akhila-jīva-batsala, niramatsara, carana-kamala-anurāgī.
tē tava priya raghubīra dhīramati, atisaya nija-para-tyāgī. 4.
jadyapi mama auguna apāra sansāra-jōgya raghurāyā.
tulasidāsa nija guna bicāri karunānidhāna karu dāyā. 5.

Verse no. 118—Oh Lord Hari! How can I feel reassured, cheerful and happy (kavana jatana sukha mānahu)? My deeds are pretentious like the tusk of an elephant (jyōm gaja-dasana tathā mama karanī)¹, and you are well aware of it (saba prakāra tuma jānahu).

[¹To wit, like an elephant who has two sets of teeth—one which is present inside its mouth which is used for chewing purposes, and the other is the external tusk which is only for show—I also pretend to be pious, holy and wise outwardly, while my deeds and thinking process are just the opposite of what I pretend to be, i.e. they are wholesomely crooked, unholy and stupid.] (1).

If I do and practice myself what I preach others (jō kachu kahiya kariya), I can cross this ocean of mundane existence (of transmigration; cycle of birth and death) so easily

and effortlessly that it would be like walking over a little puddle of water which is as small in size as a calf's hooves formed on a wet ground (**bhavasāgara tariya bacchapada jaisē**).

But what can I do? My demeanours, my character, my deeds, my inclinations and the way I live are quite different from and just the opposite of what I say (**rahani āna bidhi, kahiya āna**).

Then (since I am deceitful and pretentious and speak a lie), how can I ever hope to expect to get (or attain) the bliss, the beatitude and supreme peace that comes by attainment of your holy feet (**haripada-sukha pā'iya kaisē**)?²

[²Say, how can I attain and experience the sense of supreme and most exalted state of blissfulness and tranquility of soul which is bestowed upon a creature when he attains your holy feet, for your holy presence is attainable only when the mind and the heart are free from all corruptions, when one is free from all conceit, deceit and pretensions, and is pure and pious within and without.] (2).

Take for an example the peacock: it's form and appearance is so beautiful, its bearing is so majestic and it is generally so exceptionally attractive to look at from the outside (**dēkhata cāru mayūra**), and its voice is so pleasant that it appears to be soaked in Amrit (nectar) (**bayana subha bōli sudhā iva sānī**)—but unfortunately and ironically it feeds on poisonous snakes (**sabiṣa uraga-āhāra**). How wicked and cruel it is indeed for this bird that it looks so beautiful and appears to be quite different and contrary to what it actually does (**niṭhura asa, yaha karanī vaha bānī**)! [Verily, this is true with me also.]³ (3).

[³Taking the example of a peacock which looks so wonderful from its external appearances that one is misled and begins to adore it in the belief that it is really a nice bird and blessed by the Creator, but when one observes it closely one finds that it feeds on snakes and not on leaves and fruits like other birds though they may be far less attractive than the peacock, Tulsidas says that he is also like this peacock because his words and external behaviour make him out to be a saintly man who preaches about God and the virtues of surrender before the Lord, but in truth he is very miserable and tormented as he does not himself follow what he preaches!

In actual fact, this is not the case: it is not that Tulsidas is un-pious and not blessed by the Lord. But this self-censor and self-reproach is only a way employed by Tulsidas to alert the world about those pretentious people who call themselves self-declared saints, moral preceptors and holy men, for they are only fleecing and deceiving the world for their vested interests as they do not practice in their own personal lives what they preach others.]

Oh Lord Raghubīra (Lord Ram)! You love and respect those saints (**tē tava priya**) who love and have compassion for all the creatures in this world without having any distinction between them (**akhila-jīva-batsala**), who are not in the least jealous or envious with anyone (**niramatsara**), who are your ardent devotees and have affection for your lotus-like holy feet (**carana-kamala-anurāgī**), whose mind and intellect are stable and temperate (**dhīramati**), and who see no distinction between themselves and all other living beings, treating all alike—because they see you (the Lord God; the pure consciousness) as being manifested in the form of all living beings, because they see you universally in all these forms (**atisaya nija-para-tyāgī**). [Being devoid of all these qualities, how can I be endeared to you, or how can I expect that you would have affection for me?]⁴ (4).

[⁴This stanza lists the qualities of true saints and pious souls. Tulsidas indirectly chides pseudo saints and holy men who show none of these qualities but still expect the Lord to bless them with eternal spiritual happiness and bliss. It never comes to them, and then they blame the Lord for their misfortunes and unhappiness instead of doing some bit of introspection and self-appraisal.]

Tulsidas says (tulasidāsa)—‘Oh Lord of the Raghus (“raghurāyā”—i.e. Lord Ram who was the greatest King of the Raghu lineage of Ayodhya)! Though I have innumerable faults, countless blemishes and uncountable sins to my discredit, and am therefore fit only to live a lowly existence in this gross mortal world of sufferings and transmigration (jadyapi mama auguna apāra sansāra-jōgya), but you are an abode of mercy and compassion, someone who is famed as the merciful and universal Lord Redeemer of all (karunānidhāna), so you must take into consideration your own vows and assertions of being merciful, compassionate and benevolent towards the lowly and sinful, and being their redeemer (nija guna bicāri), and have mercy upon me (karu dāyā). Oh Lord, please be kind to show your grace and mercy on this Tulsidas as well! (tulasidāsa nija guna bicāri karunānidhāna karu dāyā)’⁵

[⁵Tulsidas invokes Lord Ram’s merciful and compassionate nature to ask the Lord to show grace and mercy upon him and redeem him inspite of the fact that he is sinful and full of faults typical of any ordinary living being. Tulsidas is so pious and a holy soul that he has no pretensions and ego in himself, and submits himself before the Lord with utmost humility and simplicity.] (5).

Delusory World

(119)

हे हरि! कवन जतन भ्रम भागै ।
 देखत, सुनत, बिचारत यह मन, निज सुभाउ नहिं त्यागै ॥1॥
 भगति—ग्यान—बैराग्य सकल साधन यहि लागि उपाई ।
 कोउ भल कहउ, देउ कछु, असि बासना न उरते जाई ॥2॥
 जेहि निसि सकल जीव सूतहिं तव कृपापात्र जन जागै ।
 निज करनी बिपरीत देखि मोहिं समुझि महा भय लागै ॥3॥
 जद्यपि भग्न—मनोरथ बिधिबस, सुख इच्छत दुख पावै ।
 चित्रकार करहीन जथा स्वारथ बिनु चित्र बनावै ॥4॥
 हृषीकेस सुनि नाउँ जाउँ बलि, अति भरोस जिय मोरे ।
 तुलसिदास इंद्रिय—संभव दुख, हरे बनिहिं प्रभु तोरे ॥5॥

(119)

hē hari! kavana jatana bhrama bhāgai.
 dēkhata, sunata, bicārata yaha mana, nija subhā'u nahim tyāgai. 1.
 bhagati-gyāna-bairāgya sakala sādhanā yahi lāgi upā'i.
 kō'u bhala kaha'u, dē'u kachu, asi bāsanā na uratē jā'i. 2.
 jēhi nisi sakala jīva sūtahim tava kṛpāpātra jana jāgai.
 nija karanī biparīta dēkhi mōhim samujhi mahā bhaya lāgai. 3.

jadyapi bhagna-manōratha bidhibasa, sukha icchata dukha pāvai.
 citrakāra karahīna jathā svāratha binu citra banāvai. 4.
 hr̥ṣīkēsa suni nā'um̐ jā'um̐ bali, ati bharōsa jiya mōrē.
 tulasidāsa indriya-sambhava dukha, harē banihim prabhu tōrē. 5.

Verse no. 119—Oh Lord Hari (Ram)! How can and by what means can I get rid of my delusions, illusions and misconceptions (about the reality of this world) that have so much confounded me (kavana jatana bhrama bhāgai)?

My 'Mana' (mind, heart and sub-conscious) sees it, hears about it, thinks and ponders over it (dēkhata, sunata, bicārata yaha mana), but still it does not abandon its stubborn habits and inherent nature of indulgence in it (nija subhā'u nahim tyāgai)¹.

[¹To wit, my mind and heart do not abandon their habit of treating this world as the real source of happiness and comfort though they are aware that it is not, and therefore my mind and heart repeatedly makes me fall for this trap known as the 'world' inspite of being aware of the horrifying consequences that I would face. This attitude of my Mana snuffs out all chances of peace and happiness that I may otherwise have had and for which I so much long. This situation has vexed and perplexed my soul, and I don't know what to and what not to do.] (1).

Devotion, enlightenment, knowledge, renunciation (bhagati-gyāna-bairāgya) etc. are the various means and methods to pacify one's self and overcome all forms of agitations and restlessness (sakala sādhanā yahi lāgi upā'ī), but the problem is that my Mana never abandons the desire (asi bāsanā na uratē jā'ī) that someone would call me good (i.e. someone would praise me—"kō'u bhala kaha'u") or give me something (i.e. some sort of honour, respect, money etc.—"dē'u kachu")².

[²Tulsidas means that desire for recognition, honour, praise, respect, fame etc. is present even in the hearts of those who say that they practice renunciation and devotion, who claim to be wise and enlightened, and those who seek liberation and deliverance from this world for their souls. In other words, worldly desires are latently present in the mind of all living beings, no matter what they claim to the contrary. And by corollary therefore, one cannot and should not expect any real peace and happiness till this desire is present in their mind.] (2).

In the night (i.e. 'darkness' symbolised by ignorance and delusions) of this illusionary world where everyone sleeps (jēhi nisi sakala jīva sūtahim), only those who have the benefit of your grace and kindness are deemed to be awake (tava kr̥pāpātra jana jāgai)³.

But seeing the adverse state of my mind and heart as well as my deeds and inclinations (nija karanī biparīta dēkhi), I am very scared (because they create a nightmare of phantoms and ghosts of fears for me, and never let me rest in peace) (mōhim samujhi mahā bhaya lāgai).

[³Here, the delusions created by the gross material world and its charms and temptations are likened to the darkness of the night when everyone appears to be sleeping peacefully from his external appearances, but may be extremely agitated during this period because of nightmares he may be seeing in his dreams. The effect is that though a person remains in bed throughout the night and is expected to wake up refreshed, he actually wakes up worn out and fatigued due to the bad dreams he had

been seeing. On the other hand, a man who does not see bad dreams would wake up actually refreshed.

Those who are indulgent in the material world continue that experience in their dreams, and wake up restless and tired and weary as ever. But those who love Lord God feel calm during their waking hours so much so that they carry this experience into the world of dreams, have a good and restful sleep, and wake up refreshed as a flower.

From the metaphysical perspective, ‘sleeping’ means being oblivious to the reality about the world that it is delusory and non-sustainable, and being ‘awake’ means being aware of the falsehood of the world and the false nature of its charms, as well as about the truthful presence of pure consciousness that transcends this material existence.] (3).

All the good destinies, fates and fortunes that a creature hopes for in this life are not available to him either due to the evil, malevolent and malignant nature of Gods and Stars (such as Saturn, Rahu etc.), or by the absence of any accumulated good effects of meritorious deeds done by him in his past lives that would have otherwise helped him to overcome any negativities in his destiny (*bidhibasa*). This failure to achieve what he wants leaves him frustrated and ill-at-ease (*bhagna-manōratha*).

Despite it (“*jadyapi*”—i.e. inspite of knowing that he should not expect happiness which is not due to him in the above circumstances), when a creature yearns and eagerly wishes to have happiness in life, he is subjected to sorrows, miseries, dejections, despair and frustrations because he does not have his wishes fulfilled (*sukha icchata dukha pāvai*)⁴.

It is like the case of a painter whose hands have been cut-off and who wishes to paint a picture by using a mere wish of his mind (as this is impossible to do because it is not possible to paint without the use of the hands) (*citrakāra karahīna jathā svāratha binu citra banāvai*). This expectation is impractical, and the futility of this exercise makes him feel sad, sorrowful, depressed and dejected. [In a similar way, I too expect happiness and salvation without making any necessary efforts in this direction, and this produces despair in me.]⁵

[⁴A creature sometimes wonders why inspite of doing good deeds in this life and making the best of efforts, all his attempts to get peace and happiness fail. The reason is that he forgets that in his past lives he had done nothing good, and on the contrary he had led a sinful life, the consequences of which have been carried forward to the current life, and they have to be suffered now. This ignorance robs him of all peace and leaves him fuming and frustrated. In this scenario, the best option for him is to leave everything in the hand of his Lord God, because by doing this he puts the onus of his welfare on the Lord’s shoulder and becomes assured of results.

⁵A painter cannot paint without hands; only wishing and conjecturing will serve no purpose. Likewise, if a person seeks spiritual peace and bliss, if he wants to give his soul rest and tranquility, if he desires liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, then he must make the right effort in the right direction. Merely wishing and hoping or blaming one’s stars won’t help.] (4).

Upon hearing that your (Lord Ram’s) name (*sunī nā’um*) is ‘Rishikesh’ (“*hr̥ṣīkēśa*”—i.e. one who is the Lord of the sense organs), I have decided to surrender myself before you (*jā’um̐ bali*). [This is because I am sure that by doing so it would now be your responsibility to control my sense organs and ensure that my mind and heart get the peace and tranquillity that they so much yearn for.]

Oh Lord! I have great faith in you, I have firm belief in you and I rely upon you (*ati bharōsa jiya mōrē*) that you will destroy (*harē banihiṁ prabhu tōrē*) the sorrows, miseries, troubles, tribulations, agonies and torments generated by the sense organs of this Tulsidas (*tulasidāsa indriya-sambhava dukha*) (5).

The World is Like a Dream

(120)

हे हरि! कस न हरहु भ्रम भारी।
जद्यपि मृषा सत्य भासै जबलगि नहि कृपा तुम्हारी॥१॥
अर्थ अबिद्यमान जानिय संसृति नहि जाइ गोसाईं।
बिन बाँधे निज हठ सठ परबस पर्यो कीरकी नाई॥२॥
सपने व्याधि बिबिध बाधा जनु मृत्यु उपस्थित आई।
बैद अनेक उपाय करै जागे बिनु पीर न जाई॥३॥
श्रुति—गुरु—साधु—समृति—संमत यह दृश्य असत दुखकारी।
तेहि बिनु तजे, भजे बिनु रघुपति, बिपति सकै को टारी॥४॥
बहु उपाय संसार—तरन कहँ, बिमल गिरा श्रुति गावै।
तुलसिदास मैं—मोर गये बिनु जिउ सुख कबहुँ न पावै॥५॥

(120)

hē hari! kasa na harahu bhrama bhārī.
jadyapi mṛṣā satya bhāsai jabalagi nahim kṛpā tumhārī. 1.
artha abidyamāna jāniya sansṛti nahim jā'i gōsā'īm.
bina bām̐dhē nija haṭha saṭha parabasa paryō kīrakī nā'īm. 2.
sapanē byādhi bibidha bādhā janu mṛtyu upasthita ā'ī.
baida anēka upāya karai jāgē binu pīra na jā'ī. 3.
śruti-guru-sādhu-samṛti-sammata yaha dṛśya asata dukhakārī.
tēhi binu tajē, bhajē binu raghupati, bipati sakai kō ṭārī. 4.
bahu upāya sansāra-tarana kaham̐, bimala girā śruti gāvai.
tulasidāsa maim̐-mōra gayē binu ji'u sukha kabahum̐ na pāvai. 5.

Verse no. 120—[This verse is a continuation of the previous verse no. 119 as the very first stanza indicates. The verse that follows this verse, i.e. verse no. 121 would further elaborate on this theme.]

Oh Lord Hari (Lord Ram)! Why don't you remove my great delusions, illusions and misconceptions (that I consider this world as true, eternal, full of joy and pleasures) (*kasa na harahu bhrama bhārī*)?

Though this world is false, untruthful and illusionary (*jadyapi mṛṣā*), but it appears to be so real and true (*satya bhāsai*) in the absence of your grace and kindness upon the creature (*jabalagi nahim kṛpā tumhārī*)¹.

[¹It is out of ignorance that my mind has created a surreal world of imaginary beauty and attractions so much so that I have begun to hallucinate. Forsooth oh Lord,

it is only by your grace that one can see the truth that exists behind the external façade of this illusionary world of delusions, and not otherwise.] (1).

I know that the objects (son, wealth, body etc.) of this world are not for real and there is no pith or meaning in them (*artha abidyamāna jāniya*), but oh Lord (*gōsā'īm*), I still do not find liberation or freedom from the bondages that I have developed with this world (by way of having attractions, attachments and longing for it's various components) (*sansṛti nahim jā'i*).

Without being under any apparent fetters or compulsions that enslave and bind me to anyone, I have voluntarily allowed myself to become bound and trapped (*bina bāṁdhē nija haṭha saṭha parabasa*) like a parrot due to my own ignorance and my own stubbornness (to refuse to realise the truth) which are aided and abetted by the delusions (created by the world) (*paryō kīrakī nā'īm*)².

[²Tulsidas essentially says that no one else is to be blamed for one's sufferings and pains in this world but one's own self. Everyone knows that he was born alone and will die alone, that one has to bear one's own cross upon one's own shoulder and no one will share it, but still everyone seeks the hand of others and hopes that others would help him. In spite of the scriptures warning that each individual comes to this world independently to lead his or her life as destined by his or her destiny, that each soul has its own path to follow, still an unwise person tries to develop bonds and relationships with others. Everyone is selfish with regard to fulfilling his own goal in life, then how can one expect them to help him to serve his own interests that run counter to the other individual's personal ambitions in life? This situation leads to constant friction and frustration, and subsequent pain and misery.] (2).

When a person falls sick in his dreams and even imagines that he is suffering from so many diseases that would prove fatal for him (*sapanē byādhi bibidha bādhā janu mṛtyu upasthita ā'i*), then no matter what medicines are administered to him externally by a physician while he is still asleep, the affliction cannot be removed till the person wakes up (*baida anēka upāya karai jāgē binu pīra na jā'i*)³.

[³Similarly, people fall in the trap of delusions and unnecessarily suffer in spite of making numerous efforts by various means, but they forget that without knowing the essential truth and having correct knowledge, wisdom and discrimination, without overcoming delusions which is at the root of all miseries, none of the agonies and torments can be eliminated just like it is impossible to remove the sufferings of a dream unless the man wakes up from it into the world of reality.] (3).

The Vedas, enlightened teachers, saints and scriptures (*śruti-guru-sādhū-samṛti*)—all assert and declare unanimously (*sammata*) that the visible world is false (illusionary like a mirage) and sorrowful (*yaha dṛśya asata dukhakārī*).

Unless one forsakes this deluding world which gives nothing but miseries and sorrows, and instead worship and venerate Lord Ram (*tēhi binu tajē, bhajē binu raghupati*), is there anyone who has the power sufficient enough to destroy or vanquish or even diminish the numerous troubles, tribulations and consternations that overwhelm the creature (*bipati sakai kō ṭārī*)? [Of course, the answer is 'no one'.] (4).

The Vedas have prescribed in an unambiguous and clear language that there are different ways to cross over to the other side of this ocean-like mundane existence

(bahu upāya sansāra-tarana khamṁ, bimala girā śruti gāvai)—but Tulsidas says that until ‘My’ and ‘Me’ are not erased or removed (i.e. until numerous attachments and ego are not eliminated) (tulasidāsa mairṁ-mōra gayē binu), the creature can never get happiness, peace, tranquillity and contentedness in life by any length of imagination (ji'u sukha kabahumṁ na pāvai)⁴.

[⁴Refer also to verse no. 122, stanza no. 5 in this context which reiterates the same thing.] (5).

Result of Delusions

(121)

हे हरि! यह भ्रमकी अधिकाई।
 देखत, सुनत, कहत, समुझत संसय—संदेह न जाई॥1॥
 जो जग मृषा ताप—त्रय—अनुभव होइ कहहु केहि लेखे।
 कहि न जाय मृगबारि सत्य, भ्रम ते दुख होइ बिसेखे॥2॥
 सुभग सेज सोवत सपने, बारिधि बूझत भय लागै।
 कोटिहुँ नाव न पार पाव सो, जब लागि आपु न जागै॥3॥
 अनबिचार रमनीय सदा, संसार भयंकर भारी।
 सम—संतोष—दया—बिबेक तें, व्यवहारी सुखकारी॥4॥
 तुलसिदास सब बिधि प्रपंच जग, जदपि झूठ श्रुति गावै।
 रघुपति—भगति, संत—संगति बिनु, को भव—त्रास नसावै॥5॥

(121)

hē hari! yaha bhramakī adhikā'ī.
 dēkhata, sunata, kahata, samujhata sansaya-sandēha na jā'ī. 1.
 jō jaga mṛṣā tāpa-traya-anubhava hō'i kahahu kēhi lēkhē.
 kahi na jāya mṛgabāri satya, bhrama tē dukha hō'i bisēkhē. 2.
 subhaga sēja sōvata sapanē, bāridhi būṛata bhaya lāgai.
 kōṭihumṁ nāva na pāra pāva sō, jaba lagi āpu na jāgai. 3.
 anabicāra ramanīya sadā, sansāra bhayaṅkara bhārī.
 sama-santōṣa-dayā-bibēka tēm, vyavahārī sukhakārī. 4.
 tulasidāsa saba bidhi prapañca jaga, jadapi jhūṭha śruti gāvai.
 raghupati-bhagati, santa-saṅgati binu, kō bhava-trāsa nasāvai. 5.

Verse no. 121—Oh Lord Hari (Lord Sri Ram)! It is only due to the predominance of delusions that (yaha bhramakī adhikā'ī) inspite of seeing, hearing, speaking and understanding (dēkhata, sunata, kahata, samujhata), doubts and uncertainties (whether the Lord God is one or of a dual nature, whether the world is real or imaginary, is there any level of existence other than the gross level in which the world exists, and so on and so forth) are not eliminated (sansaya-sandēha na jā'ī)¹.

[¹To wit, a creature never finds rest till the time his mind is torn by dilemmas and confusions; he swings widely like a pendulum between this and that, not being certain to decide upon one path that would help him find what he wants.

This verse elaborates upon the theme of the previous verse nos. 119—120.] (1).

Someone might say (or ask), ‘If this world is false, then why do we experience the effects of the three Traitaps (the tormenting and misery creating effect of the three tormentors in this world, viz. Adhaytmik, Adhibhautik and Daivik)²’ (jō jaga mṛṣā tāpa-traya-anubhava hō’i kahahu kēhi lēkhē).

[Since we actually feel the negative effects of these Traitaps which give pain and grief continually, since we suffer endlessly from the misery created by them, then it is difficult to believe that the source of the Traitaps, i.e. the gross world, is false and it does not exist. But the scriptures insist that the world is an illusionary creation of the mind, and so are its sufferings. The two propositions seem quite the opposite of each other; they don’t match.]

The answer to this perplexing dilemma is to be found in the example of the mirage seen in a desert and a man’s pursuit for water in it: “The water seen in a desert mirage appears to be physically present as long as the mirage exists, but this illusion of the water vanishes as soon as the mirage ends. In this fascinating miracle of Nature, however, it is the thirsty man who suffers and put to endless grief and agonies—for he runs behind this mirage in search of water to quench his thirst, only to realise that the water is not available, that it recedes further and further from him the more he runs towards it, and after a futile chase he falls down exhausted, disenchanted, thirsty, and all the worst for his hopes. But the irony is, inspite of having read about it and warned about it by experienced travellers, and how it traps the thirsty man in a desert till he dies running behind it, the man would not believe that the water which he sees in the distance in the desert with his own eyes is merely an illusion; he takes it for real. And this surreal delusion results in his greater miseries and sufferings, for the pursuit of this water saps him of whatever energy he may have left in him, enhancing his exhaustion and bringing his death closer.” (kahi na jāya mṛgabāri satya)

In the same way, the sorrows, miseries and tribulations are felt only due to delusions and hallucinations created in this world by its delusory effects (bhrama tē dukha hō’i bisēkhē)³.

[²The three Traitaps: Refer verse no. 17, stanza no. 2; verse no. 81, stanza no. 1; verse no. 83, stanza no. 3.

³The creature is told repeatedly about the futility of expecting lasting happiness and peace from the material things of the world. But still he is so deluded that he goes after the world with hammer and tongs so to speak. He becomes infatuated with the world and its sense objects, with its pleasures and charms, forgetting that whatso pleasures and happiness they seem to give are only transient and superficial, for sooner rather than later this satisfaction would vanish and he would be left with a desire to have more and more of it, for desires, wants and longings have no end, and they lengthen and become more wanton with the passage of time. This then becomes an endless chain which brings in its wake its own lot of suffering, grief and pain. So, the original aim of getting happiness and joy by pursuing

the world is replaced with an endless cycle of agitations and restlessness which would obviously rob one of whatever peace he had in the beginning of it at all.] (2).

If a man who is sleeping comfortably on a bed in his home dreams (*subhaga sēja sōvata sapanē*) of drowning in an ocean, he gets extremely agitated and becomes overcome with the fear of getting actually drowned (*bāridhi būrata bhaya lāgai*), but unless he wakes up from his sleep (*jaba lagi āpu na jāgai*), he cannot cross that ocean of fear even by riding on millions of boats (*kōṭihum̐ nāva na pāra pāva sō*)⁴.

[⁴As soon as he wakes up, the illusion of his sinking vanishes, and therefore, all his scare also vanishes. So the remedy for the nightmare of sinking in an ocean while one dreams is only found in waking up from his dreams, which means to wake up from an imaginary world seen in one's sleep into the reality of the world.

In the same way, this creature (soul) is drowning in this ocean-like mundane world of grossness because he is rendered unconscious by his ignorance-like sleep. Therefore, unless he wakes up from this ignorance to become enlightened with respect to the true knowledge about the world and about the essence of the supreme Atma, the pure Consciousness, about the nature of this world and his own true nature, he cannot be free of sorrows, miseries and tribulations⁴.

The creature is so overridden with ignorance about the truth that he remains oblivious of the reality. He thinks that the gross material world that he sees is the real thing, that his gross body is his real self, that real happiness and joy can be had from the gross world, that it is an end in itself, and that there is nothing beyond it. This misbelief causes an immense amount of pain, grief and suffering to him, but in his foolish ignorance he tries to find the remedy in the disease itself. This causes the 'disease' to be firmly entrenched.

However, if a creature wakes up from this sleep of ignorance into the world of realism, when he becomes wise and knowledgeable, when truth dawns upon his mind, he realises that the world is gross and perishable, that it and its charms as well as sufferings are merely a creation of the mind, that anything which is gross and perishable and which has its origin in delusions cannot give abiding happiness, he searches for other options. It is then that he seeks the truth and is guided by the scriptures which tell him that beyond the grossness of the world there is an existence that is transcendental, that is sublime and subtle, that does not perish and is a fount of bliss and joy. And what is it? It is known as the world of 'pure Consciousness' that is the truth of existence. And where is this world to be found? It is within one's own self as his Atma, and at a more universal level it is the cosmic Consciousness known as the "Parmatma" or the Supreme Being. But surely and definitely it is not the gross world one longs for and pursues.

Once this knowledge comes to the enlightened creature, it is like he has woken up from a bad dream that made him suffer unnecessarily.] (3).

This extremely fierce and cruel world (*sansāra bhayaṅkara bhārī*) looks pleasant and appealing only due to ignorance (*anabīcāra ramanīya sadā*), and the creature is so much deluded that he is being misled by its illusionary enchantments and allurements.

Surely, this world can be comforting and joyful (*vyavahārī sukhakārī*) for those who practice self-control and equanimity, those who have contentment, those

who have mercy and compassion in them, and those who act with wisdom, discrimination and erudition (*sama-santōṣa-dayā-bibēka tēm*)⁵.

[⁵It is because then they would not fall victim to illusions and falsehoods, and realise the true nature of things. They would not run after the illusive charms of the world with the greed of a thirsty man running behind the mirage for water. They will remain contented with whatever they have. They would treat all living beings alike and have compassion for them as they see the same consciousness in them, and this attitude would make them endeared to all other creatures, as well as respected and adored by the world. The world would treat them as its guide and true friend, going out of its way to oblige them and give them comfort without even their asking for it. Obviously this situation would be almost like a paradise on earth for such self-realised, wise and enlightened persons who have ‘woken up to the truth’.] (4).

Tulsidas says that though the Vedas assert that it is true that this world and its extended tentacles of charm and fascination are totally false (*tulasidāsa saba bidhi prapañca jaga, jadapi jhūṭha śruti gāvai*), but it is so life-like and surreal that it is difficult to free oneself from its magical charms, its great fears and its formidable delusions (*kō bhava-trāsa nasāvai*), except by having devotion and faith in Lord Sri Ram, by having the Lord’s grace, and by the company of wise, self-realised and enlightened saints (*raghupati-bhagati, santa-saṅgati binu*)⁶.

[⁶Tulsidas prescribes three remedies for worldly overcoming spiritual problems and delusions of the world: (i) devotion for Lord God; (ii) Lord’s grace; and (iii) company of saintly persons.] (5).

Importance of Enlightenment and Wisdom

(122)

मैं हरि, साधन करइ न जानी ।
जस आमय भेषज न कीन्ह तस, दोष कहा दिरमानी ॥1॥
सपने नृप कहँ घटै बिप्र-बध, बिकल फिरै अघ लागे ।
बाजिमेध सत काटि करै नहि सुद्ध होइ बिनु जागे ॥2॥
झग महुँ सर्प बिपुल भयदायक, प्रगट होइ अबिचारे ।
बहु आयुध धरि, बल अनेक करि हारहि, मरइ न मारे ॥3॥
निज भ्रम ते रबिकर-संभव सागर अति भय उपजावै ।
अबगाहत बोहित नौका चढ़ि कबहुँ पार न पावै ॥4॥
तुलसिदास जग आपु सहित जब लागि निरमूल न जाई ।
तब लागि कोटि कलप उपाय करि मरिय, तरिय नहिं भाई ॥5॥

(122)

mairi hari, sādhanā kara'i na jānī.
jasa āmaya bhēṣaja na kīnha tasa, dōṣa kahā diramānī. 1.
sapanē nrpa kham' ghaṭai bipra-badha, bikala phirai agha lāgē.

bājimēdha sata kāṭi karai nahim sud'dha hō'i binu jāgē. 2.
 sraga maham̐ sarpa bipula bhayadāyaka, pragaṭa hō'i abicārē.
 bahu āyudha dhari, bala anēka kari hārahim̐, mara'i na mārē. 3.
 nija bhrama tē rabikara-sambhava sāgara ati bhaya upajāvai.
 abagāhata bōhita naukā caḍhi kabahūm̐ pāra na pāvai. 4.
 tulasidāsa jaga āpu sahita jaba lagi niramūla na jā'i.
 taba lagi kōṭi kalapa upāya kari mariya, tariya nahim bhā'i. 5.

Verse no. 122—[This verse elaborates on what has been said in verse no. 121.]

Oh Hari (Lord Sri Ram)! I had not attempted any 'Sādhana' (i.e. I have made no special and concerted efforts for destruction of my ignorance or for improvement of my destiny—"mair̐ hari, sādhanā kara'i na jānī").

I had not taken proper medicine according to my disease (jasa āmaya bhēṣaja na kīnha tasa). This being the case, what is the fault of the medicine that my disease has not been cured (dōṣa kahā diramānī)?¹

[¹The medicine cannot be blamed if it is not able to cure my affliction because I am taking a wrong medicine. Instead of pursuing the right path that would help me get rid of my delusions and overcome my ignorance, I am following the wrong path, then say why and how can I blame the 'path' itself for my miseries and for not letting me reach my goal?

In the last two stanzas of verse no. 121 herein above, Tulsidas has outlined the correct remedy for all spiritual problems arising out of ignorance of the truth—viz. wisdom and acquisition of knowledge about the reality, devotion and faith in Lord God, and the company of saints because this company helps to show the correct path, give guidance and remove all doubts. He elaborates further herein below.] (1).

If during the course of his dreams while asleep, a king is cursed by the horrifying sin of killing a Brahmin (sapanē nr̐pa kham̐ ghaṭai bipra-badha), and he wanders everywhere being agitated and tormented by this great curse (bikala phirai agha lāgē), would he ever get rid of it unless he wakes up from his sleep (nahim sud'dha hō'i binu jāgē), instead of or inspite of doing millions of 'Ashwamegh Yagyas' (horse sacrifices) while being still asleep (bājimēdha sata kāṭi karai)^{2#}?

[²Similarly, one cannot get rid of the sins and faults originating from ignorance and delusions without the knowledge of the supreme Truth (of the 'self' and 'Consciousness'), and without having wisdom and enlightenment.

The same idea that one's sufferings in a dream cannot be overcome till one wakes up from his nightmare is mentioned in verse no. 121, stanza no. 3.] (2).

[Citing another example, Tulsidas says—] Even as one feels terrified when one mistakenly regards a garland to be a fearful snake out of his own ignorance about the reality (sraga maham̐ sarpa bipula bhayadāyaka pragaṭa hō'i abicārē), and is unable to kill the latter (the snake) even after getting tired of striking it hard repeatedly with different weapons till the time that ignorance about the fictitious snake is removed upon realisation of the truth about the garland (bahu āyudha dhari, bala anēka kari hārahim̐, mara'i na mārē)^{3*}.

[³The case with the gross material world is exactly the same. It is so deluding and cunning that appears to be true and attractive so much so that it pulls everyone into its vortex of ignorance and delusions and their accompanying miseries and grief that cannot be destroyed or got rid off merely by external means without having enlightenment, wisdom and true knowledge of the essence of the existence and the supreme Truth in it.] (3).

[Two examples have been given here by Tulisdas.

Stanza no. 2 = #One is that of a king who tries to overcome the curse of harming a Brahmin in his dreams while asleep, and then trying to atone for this sin by undertaking arduous methods such as performing the elaborate horse sacrifice. Well, all this exercise of trying to do the horse sacrifice is a waste of his time, energy and resources because the simple method to get rid of his guilt is to wake up from his sleep and realise that he has actually not harmed any Brahmin at all!

Stanza no. 3 = *The second example is like trying to kill an imaginary snake that is visualised in the length of a lifeless garland lying on the ground by beating it endlessly with sticks till one falls down due to exhaustion of the effort. The effortless method is to realise that it is a 'garland' and 'not a snake' in the first place.

Likewise, the best way to overcome all the problems associated with the world is to understand that both the world and the gross body of the creature who feels the sufferings of this world are not the real thing, for on the one hand the 'true self' of the creature is not his gross body but his Atma which is pure consciousness, and on the other hand, the charms of the gross world and its countless miseries are an imagination of the mind. In reality, neither the charms nor the pains associated with the world affect the Atma of the creature, and they are limited only to the sense organs of perception of the gross body which is however not his 'true self'. This being the case, say why should and would a wise man be so upset with things that don't really concern 'him'—only if he understands that 'he' is not the gross body which interacts with the equally gross world to suffer from its pains or exult in its joys, but 'he' is the pure conscious Atma that is subtle, sublime, calm, and a fountainhead of bliss and happiness? It is the gross body and its gross sense organs that feel the world and are affected by this interaction, and not the wise person himself! This realisation of the 'Truth' at once eliminates all sources and causes of miseries and pains.]

When a man is hallucinating in a desert, he sees a huge ocean-like body of water created in a mirage due to sun's rays falling on a barren stretch of hot desert land (*nija bhrama tē rabikara-sambhava sāgara*), and then he becomes greatly afraid and highly worried that he won't be able to cross it (without the help of a large boat or ship) (*ati bhaya upajāvai*).

Say, is it not sheer madness for him in worrying about where to search for large boat or ship to take him across this vast ocean instead of calming down and realising that all this is an optical illusion. All he needs to do is to walk on calmly with poise, and the ocean won't obstruct his way at all—because the ocean itself is non-existent (*abagāhata bōhita naukā caḍhi kabahūṁ pāra na pāvai*)⁴.

[⁴To wit, this exactly is the case with this world and its miseries. Only if a person becomes wise, enlightened and self-realised would he be able to overcome all fears associated with this gross mundane world, and not otherwise. The water in the

mirage in the desert is a similar case like this ocean-like world which is produced out of abject ignorance of the creature about the true nature of things.] (4).

Tulsidas observes (tulasidāsa): ‘Oh Brother (bhā'ī)! Unless the deluding world of material sense objects and the sense of belonging and attachment to it's artificial things that are created by the notion of them being ‘my or mine’, i.e. the sense of ‘mine-ness’ in it (jaga āpu sahita jaba lagi) is not destroyed (i.e. removed or conquered) from its roots (niramūla na jā'ī), till that time you can never hope to cross it or overcome its delusions (taba lagi -- tariya nahim bhā'ī) inspite of your tirelessly making countless efforts to do so over a long period of time (kōṭi kalapa upāya kari mariya)⁵.’

[⁵To wit, one has to develop a sense of dispassion, of detachment and renunciation, if one really wants to break free from its entanglements. It is the sense of belonging that creates attachment to the world and its charms. If this sense of ‘mine’ is got rid of, the rest of the fetters are easily broken.

Refer also to verse no. 120, stanza no. 5 in this context which reiterates the same thing.] (5).

Mere talk is not enough

(123)

अस कछु समुझि परत रघुराया!
 बिनु तव कृपा दयालु! दास-हित! मोह न छूटै माया॥1॥
 बाक्य-ग्यान अत्यन्त निपुन भव-पार न पावै कोई।
 निसि गृहमध्य दीपकी बातन्ह, तम निवृत्त नहिं होई॥2॥
 जैसे कोई इक दीन दुखित अति असन-हीन दुख पावै।
 चित्र कलपतरु कामधेनु गृह लिखे न बिपति नसावै॥3॥
 षटरस बहुप्रकार भोजन कोउ, दिन अरु रैन बखानै।
 बिनु बोले संतोष-जनित सुख खाइ सोइ पै जानै॥4॥
 जबलगि नहिं निज हृदि प्रकास, अरु बिषय-आस मनमाहीं।
 तुलसिदास तबलगि जग-जोनि भ्रमत सपनेहुँ सुख नाही॥5॥

(123)

asa kachu samujhi parata raghurāyā!

binu tava kṛpā dayālu! dāsa-hita! mōha na chūṭai māyā. 1.

bākya-gyāna atyanta nipuna bhava-pāra na pāvai kō'ī.

nisi gṛhamadhyā dīpakī bātanha, tama nivṛtta nahim hō'ī. 2.

jaisē kō'i ika dīna dukhita ati asana-hīna dukha pāvai.

citra kalapataru kāmādhēnu gṛha likhē na bipati nasāvai. 3.

ṣaṭarasa bahuprakāra bhōjana kō'u, dina aru raini bakhānai.

binu bōlē santōṣa-janita sukha khā'i sō'i pai jānai. 4.

jabalagi nahim nija hṛdi prakāsa, aru biṣaya-āsa manamāhīm.

tulasidāsa tabalagi jaga-jōni bhramata sapanēhum^ṣ sukha nāhīm. 5.

Verse no. 123—Oh Lord Raghunath (Lord Ram, the Lord who took birth in the Raghu dynasty of the kingdom of Ayodhya—“raghurāyā”)! Oh merciful Lord, oh the benefactor of your devotees (dayālu! dāsa-hita!), it appears to me that (asa kachu samujhi parata) without your mercy, grace and kindness (binu tava kṛpā dayā), it is not possible to either remove attachments and infatuations (with this materialistic world), nor to get rid of the delusions and falsehoods that abound all around (mōha na chūṭai māyā)¹ (1).

[¹Refer verse no. 120, stanza no. 1 also in this context.]

Like it is not possible to eliminate darkness in the house by merely talking about a lamp (unless it is actually lit—“nisi gr̥hamadhya dīpakī bātanha, tama nivṛtta nahīm hōṭi”), it is also not possible to cross this ocean of mundane existence (bhava-pāra na pāvai kōṭi) merely by being an expert orator of knowledge and preacher of wisdom contained in the scriptures (bākya-gyāna atyanta nipuna). [To wit, unless one imbibes the true meaning of the knowledge taught in the scriptures and implements them in his life before preaching others, it simply becomes an exercise in oratorical skill, and nothing more. No worthwhile good is achieved.] (2).

If a poor and utterly distressed person is immensely suffering from hunger and poverty (jaisē kō'i ika dīna dukhita ati asana-hīna dukha pāvai), and someone tries to remove his suffering by painting pictures of a Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling celestial tree of Gods) or a Kamdhenu-cow (the wish-fulfilling cow of Gods) on the walls of his house (citra kalapataru kāmādhēnu gr̥ha likhē), say is it possible to remove his hunger and agonies by those pictures, instead of giving him actual food to eat or financial aid to remove his poverty (na bipati nasāvai)? [It's never possible to do so! Similarly, delusions, attachments, passions, infatuations etc. are not removed merely by talking about them or quoting the scriptures (unless their precepts and concepts are implemented in life in practical terms.)] (3).

If someone lectures day and night on the goodness, the taste, the aroma and the satisfaction derived from various types of delicious foods (ṣaṭarasa bahuprakāra bhōjana kō'u, dina aru raini bakhānai), but the actual taste of this food, the actual contentedness of eating such delicious food, and the satiety of hunger that the tasteful food provides can be experienced and witnessed only by him who has actually eaten it even without hearing the lecture on the quality and goodness of the food (binu bōlē santōṣa-janita sukha khā'i sō'i pai jānai). [In a similar way, mere lecturing on scriptures and their spiritual philosophy is futile unless they are put to practice in daily life. No benefit is got by verbal acrobatics and intellectual gymnastics unless what is preached is practiced by the preacher in his own life.] (4).

Tulsidas asserts that as long as (tulasidāsa tabalagi) the light of enlightenment and knowledge of the essence of the supreme Truth is not shone in one's own heart, unless one becomes self-realised (jabalagi nahīm nija hr̥di prakāsa), and till the desires for the objects of this material world and hope for obtaining comfort and joy from them

continue to rise inside one's heart (*aru biṣaya-āsa manamāhīm*), one would have to wander like a vagabond in this world in search of peace and happiness that would always elude him, and he would have to take repeated births through different wombs in this world, i.e. become different types of creatures in the cycle of birth and death in search of that happiness and peace, and for fulfillment of his never-ending desires (*jaga-jōni bhramata*).

Verily indeed, true happiness, peace and tranquillity would never be within his reach even in his dreams (*sapanēhum sukha nāhīm*) (5).

The Mind

(124)

जौ निज मन परिहरै बिकारा ।
 तौ कत द्वैत—जनित संसृति—दुख, संसय, सोक अपारा ॥1॥
 सत्रु, मित्र, मध्यस्थ, तीनि ये, मन कीन्हें बरिआई ।
 त्यागन, गहन, उपेच्छनीय, अहि, हाटक, तृनकी नाई ॥2॥
 असन, बसन, पसु, बस्तु बिबिधबिधि, सब मनि महुँ रह जैसे ।
 सरग, नरक, चर—अचर लोक बहु, बसत मध्य मन तैसे ॥3॥
 बिटप—मध्य पुतरिका, सूत महुँ कंचुकि बिनहि बनाये ।
 मन महुँ तथा लीन नाना तनु, प्रगटत अवसर पाये ॥4॥
 रघुपति—भगति—बारि—छालित चित, बिनु प्रयास ही सूझै ।
 तुलसिदास कह चिद—बिलास जग बूझत बूझत बूझै ॥5॥

(124)

jau nija mana pariharai bikārā.
tau kata dvaita-janita sansṛti-dukha, sansaya, sōka apārā. 1.
satru, mitra, madhyastha, tīni yē, mana kīnhēm bari'ā'ī.
tyāgana, gahana, upēcchanīya, ahi, hāṭaka, ṭṛnakī nā'ī. 2.
asana, basana, pasu, bastu bibidhabidhi, saba mani maham'raha jaisē.
saraga, naraka, cara-acara lōka bahu, basata madhya mana taisē. 3.
biṭapa-madhya putarikā, sūta maham'kaṇcuki binahim banāyē.
mana maham'tathā līna nānā tanu, pragaṭata avasara pāyē. 4.
raghupati-bhagati-bāri-chālita cita, binu prayāsa hī sūjhai.
tulasidāsa kaha cida-bilāsa jaga būjhata būjhata būjhai. 5.

Verse no. 124—If one's Mana (mind and heart complex) abandons its numerous faults and shortcomings such as depravations, vices, evil thoughts, doubts, deceit, crookedness, falsehood, trickery, deception, perversities and other such faults (*jau nija mana pariharai bikārā*), then why would one be subjected to the numerous tribulations, sorrows, miseries, troubles, delusions etc. originating from this world due to the result of or the sense of duality in it (*tau kata dvaita-janita sansṛti-dukha, sansaya, sōka apārā*)¹.

[¹To wit, all these faults which are prevalent are due to the weakness of the mind in its inability in deciding the true nature of the world, about the truth and the nature of the ‘self’, and the essential truth of existence. Earlier verse no. 120, stanza no. 5 has also affirmed that the sense of duality is the cause of all sorrows in this world. When one becomes enlightened and wise enough to realise that the same Atma, the pure consciousness, prevails everywhere in the living world in a uniform manner, and that aside from this ‘consciousness’ there is no reality and truth in this existence, all cause of ill-will, animosity, jealousy and discord would disappear. One would never feel deprived of anything. One would also understand that this material world does not give true and real happiness, but on the contrary to be involved in it would only give pain and sorrows, because this world itself is transient and impermanent. True happiness comes with internal contentedness with whatever one has, as desires and yearnings have no end.

Verse no. 125 herein below lists some of the other faults and shortcomings that taint and corrupt the Mana.] (1).

The Mana has forced the living being to imagine that there are three types of persons: those who are enemies, those who are friends, and those who are neutral or indifferent to him (*satru, mitra, madhyastha, tīni yē, mana kīnhēm bari'ā'ī*).

It is the Mana that thinks that the ‘enemy’ should be abandoned as if he were a serpent (*tyāgana -- ahi*), a ‘friend’ should be accepted as if he were gold (*gahana -- hāṭaka*), and an ‘indifferent’ person should be neglected or ignored like he was a blade of worthless grass or reed (*upēcchanīya -- ṭṛnakī nā'ī*)².

[²All these situations are merely an imagination of the mind (for in actual fact, there is no friend or enemy in this world because the same Lord resides in all of us as the Atma or the pure consciousness, and the person who seems to be indifferent to us may in fact be highly enlightened, renunciate and dispassionate as he treats everyone alike and has no distinction between an enemy and a friend.

Refer also to verse nos. 120-121 in this context.] (2).

Even as all material things such as food, clothes, domestic animals and many other types of things (*asana, basana, pasu, bastu bibidhabidhi*) are present (i.e. easily available) wherever there is a priceless and rare piece of ‘Mani’ (a gem of great value) in hand (*saba mani maham'raha jaisē*), so do heaven, hell, animate, inanimate and many other types of creations reside in this Mana, i.e. they are the creations of the Mana (*saraga, naraka, cara-acara lōka bahu, basata madhya mana taisē*)³.

[³To wit, like any necessity of life can be purchased with the price of a small but valuable gem, a person can go to heaven or hell, can derive happiness and grief with relation to countless things in this world, and regard a particular thing as important and the other as unimportant depending on the state of his mind and its inclinations. The same set of circumstances that evoke no emotions in a truly enlightened person who may treat them with neutrality and dispassion, would ignite a strong reaction with another person who feels that he is personally affected by them, either for good or for bad. Forsooth therefore, it is the Mana that controls how a person treats the world and life in it, whether he feels happiness around him or is always complaining and grumbling at his misfortunes.] (3).

Even as wood is inherently present in and is an integral part of a wooden puppet without even mentioning about it (*biṭapa-madhya putarikā*), and so is cotton an integral and an inseparable part of cloth made from its yarn (*sūta maham' kañcuki*),

without their being apparent or being obvious in the finished product (*binahim̐ banāyē*), so do many forms (i.e. imaginable shapes and ideas) are present intrinsically in the Mana (*mana maham̐ tathā līna nānā tanu*), and they take formal shape or reveal themselves in due time or at an opportune moment (*pragaṭata avasara pāyē*)⁴.

[⁴The sub-conscious part of the mind is a veritable store-house of knowledge culled from one's experiences and a data bank for all the information collected by the conscious aspect of the mind, the intellect. When the mind needs to act, it falls back on this reserve of knowledge and extracts whatever data it needs to formulate a decision. The mind is the steering wheel of the body of the creature, for all his actions, responses, deeds and behaviours are controlled by the mind. So, the importance and role of the mind vis-à-vis the fate of the creature cannot be underestimated. If the mind is corrupted, everything goes for a toss; and if the mind is well-cultured and well-cultivated, the creature enjoys the happiness and peace. An agitated mind gives the creature a hellish life in this world, while a controlled and disciplined mind gives him the best of what the world has to offer to him.

Just like the wood of the wooden toy and the cotton in the cloth, the mind is subtly and secretly behind whatever the creature becomes, how he treats the world and his life in it, and what destiny he determines for him. Verily and without gainsay, the mind is the key to one's happiness and grief, it is the key to his emancipation and deliverance on the one hand, or his entanglement and miseries associated with this gross world on the other hand.] (4).

The dirt and countless faults that cling to this Mana can be easily removed without making any effort for it (*binu prayāsa*) only when the intellect and the sub-conscious mind are washed clean using the water of devotion and affection for the Lord God (Sri Ram) (*raghupati-bhagati-bāri-chālita cita*), for it is then only that can one see the true nature of the Supreme Lord even without an effort or attempt to do so (*binu prayāsa hī sūjhai*).

[To wit, when one develops devotion and affection for the Lord, all worldly taints sticking to the Mana would be eliminated automatically. It is then that one would be able to experience the presence of true bliss all around him in the same world that was the cause of so many pains and grief for him earlier.]

Tulsidas says (*tulasidāsa kaha*) that the truthful nature and the actual reality of this gross world of illusionary pleasures, sensual objects, material allurements and wild passions etc. will become obvious in a gradual manner when one develops wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation (*jaga būjhata būjhata būjhai*). He would then realise that this vast and varied world is actually an extension of the mind, and the reality in it is the supreme Consciousness that pervades throughout it (like the wood is in the toy and the cotton is in the cloth) (*cida-bilāsa jaga*).

[That is to say, with the gradual rise in one's level of understanding and betterment of experience based on minute and close observation of the world, one comes to realise that what one sees is merely a gross imagination of the mind, and if one were to peep deeper to find what lies behind this façade one would discover that the only thing of worth in this world is the subtle and sublime entity known as the 'consciousness' that is a synonym of 'life'. All the rest is falsehood and mere conjecture.] (5).

Culprits that Occupy the Heart

(125)

मैं केहि कहौं बिपति अति भारी । श्री रघुबीर धीर हितकारी ॥1॥
 मम हृदय भवन प्रभु तोरा । तहँ बसे आइ बहु चोरा ॥2॥
 अति कठिन करहिं बरजोरा । मानहिं नहिं बिनय निहोरा ॥3॥
 तम, मोह, लोभ, अहँकारा । मद, क्रोध, बोध—रिपु मारा ॥4॥
 अति करहिं उपद्रव नाथा । मरदहिं मोहि जानि अनाथा ॥5॥
 मैं एक, अमित बटपारा । कोउ सुनै न मोर पुकारा ॥6॥
 भागेहु नहिं नाथ! उबारा । रघुनायक, करहु सँभारा ॥7॥
 कह तुलसिदास सुनु रामा । लूटहिं तसकर तव धामा ॥8॥
 चिंता यह मोहि अपारा । अपजस नहिं होइ तुम्हारा ॥9॥

(125)

mair̥m kēhi kahaur̥m bipati ati bhārī. śrī raghubīra dhīra hitakārī. 1.
 mama hr̥daya bhavana prabhu tōrā. taham̃ basē ā'i bahu cōrā. 2.
 ati kaṭhina karahim̃ barajōrā. mānahim̃ nahim̃ binaya nihōrā. 3.
 tama, mōha, lōbha, aham̃kārā. mada, krōdha, bōdha-ripu mārā. 4.
 ati karahim̃ upadrava nāthā. maradahim̃ mōhi jāni anāthā. 5.
 mair̥m ēka, amita baṭapārā. kō'u sunai na mōra pukārā. 6.
 bhāgēhu nahim̃ nātha! ubārā. raghunāyaka, karahu sam̃bhārā. 7.
 kaha tulasidāsa sunu rāmā. lūṭahim̃ tasakara tava dhāmā. 8.
 cintā yaha mōhim̃ apārā. apajasa nahim̃ hō'i tumhārā. 9.

Verse no. 125—Oh Lord Raghubir (“śrī raghubīra”—Lord Sri Ram)! Oh the Lord who is patient, tolerant, calm and wise (dhīra) who does good to others and looks after their welfare selflessly (hitakārī).

Other than you, before whom else should I narrate my extreme level of woes, my grief, misery, torment and tribulation (mair̥m kēhi kahaur̥m bipati ati bhārī)? (1).

Oh my Lord, though my heart is an abode of your goodself (mama hr̥daya bhavana prabhu tōrā), yet a number of thieves, robbers, thugs and scoundrels have sneaked into it nowadays, and ironically they have taken up residence in my heart in spite of the fact that it is your own abode (taham̃ basē ā'i bahu cōrā).

[To wit, my heart, which is supposed to be your abode, has now been surreptitiously occupied by countless faults and vices. I did not allow them in voluntarily though, but they have nevertheless sneaked in somehow, and now they threaten me with dire consequences if I do not yield to them.] (2).

These rogues are very adamant, very stubborn, extremely belligerent and highly arrogant, and they force their will upon me (ati kaṭhina karahim̃ barajōrā).

They do not heed my prayers, requests and pleadings to leave me alone and let me live in peace (mānahim nahim binaya nihōrā) (3).

Among these symbolic thieves (intruders; trespassers; culprits; scoundrels who have occupied my heart), there are seven who are the chief offenders—viz. ‘Tama’ (darkness caused by ignorance), ‘Moha’ (attachments or infatuations), ‘Lobha’ (greed, avarice, covetousness and desires), ‘Ahankar’ (pride, vanity, ego, hypocrisy), ‘Mada’ (arrogance and haughtiness), ‘Krodha’ (anger, wrath, indignation, maliciousness, vengeance and discords), and ‘Kaam’ (lust, passion, lasciviousness) which is an eternal enemy of wisdom and discrimination (tama, mōha, lōbha, ahamkāra. mada, krōdha, bōdha-ripa mārā)¹ (4).

[¹Refer also to verse no. 124, stanza no. 1 herein above.]

Oh Lord (nāthā)! They are playing havoc with me, creating for me a lot of mischief and nuisance (ati karahim upadrava), and thinking that I have no protector and patron over my head (jāni anāthā), they are literally crushing me, they are strangling me and suffocating me so much that I have lost whatever freedom, peace and happiness that I had (maradahim mōhi) (5).

I am alone while these culprits are numerous (mairim ēka, amita baṭapārā). No one pays any attention to my cries and appeals for help (kō'u sunai na mōra pukārā) (6).

Oh Lord, even if I run away, it is not possible to get rid of them (bhāgēhu nahim nātha ubārā), because they constantly pursue me wherever I go.

Now, oh the Lord of the Raghu's line of kings (“raghunāyaka”—i.e. Lord Ram)! Take care of me, protect me and save me (karahu sambhārā) from these thugs, as well as the precarious and dismal situation in which I find myself (7).

Tulsidas further says (kaha tulasidāsa), ‘Listen my Lord Sri Ram (sunu rāmā)! These thieves and scoundrels are robbing your own house and quietly smuggling every worthwhile thing out of it, thereby emptying it of all its goodness and virtuous qualities (“lūṭahim tasakara tava dhāmā”—i.e. they are emptying my heart where you live of all its goodness and virtuous qualities, and this would one day put you to shame; so please become alert while still there is time for you, and chase these smugglers out of my heart) (8).

I am greatly worried (cintā yaha mōhim apārā) that you should not get a bad name (apajasa nahim hō'i tumhārā) if you do not pay heed to my urgent appeal for action in this regard².

[²Despite my being your ardent devotee, if these rascals steal the valuable jewels of my heart, i.e. the various virtues, good and noble qualities that my heart has, then it will be a matter of shame for you and would cast you in a bad light because I have declared that my heart is your own abode, and also because I have prayed to you to help me evict these rascals. Therefore, take care of your house and live up to your responsibilities and reputations. And I know it that you can certainly do it.] (9).

Advice to the Mind

(126)

मन मेरे, मानहि सिख मेरी। जो निज भगति चहै हरि केरी॥१॥
 उर आनहि प्रभु—कृत हित जेते। सेवहिं ते जे अपनपौ चेतें॥२॥
 दुख—सुख अरु अपमान—बड़ाई। सब सम लेखहि बिपति बिहाई॥३॥
 सुनु सठ काल—ग्रसित यह देही। जनि तेहि लागि बिदूषहि केही॥४॥
 तुलसिदास बिनु असि मति आये। मिलहिं न राम कपट—लौ लाये॥५॥

(126)

mana mērē, mānahi sikha mērī. jō nija bhagati cahai hari kērī. 1.
 ura ānahi prabhu-kṛta hita jētē. sēvahiṁ tē jē apanapau cētē. 2.
 dukha-sukha aru apamāna-barā'ī. saba sama lēkhahi bipati bihā'ī. 3.
 sunu saṭha kāla-grasita yaha dēhī. jani tēhi lāgi bidūṣahi kēhī. 4.
 tulasidāsa binu asi mati āyē. milahiṁ na rāma kapaṭa-lau lāyē. 5.

Verse no. 126—Oh my Mana (“mana mērē”—i.e. the mind and heart complex)! If you wish to have devotion for the Lord God in your heart (inner-self) (jō nija bhagati cahai hari kērī), then listen and pay heed to my advice (mānahi sikha mērī) (1).

Recall and remember all the favours that the Lord God has shown or bestowed upon you (since your conception in your mother's womb untill this day) (ura ānahi prabhu-kṛta hita jētē), and you must serve him diligently, earnestly, carefully and conscientiously after abandoning pride, vanity and arrogance (sēvahiṁ tē jē apanapau cētē) (2).

Have equanimity and fortitude, and remain unruffled and unperturbed under all circumstances (saba sama lēkhahi). Treat praise and insult (honour and rebuke), joys and sorrows (favourable and unfavourable circumstances) alike with a mind that is calm, uniform and temperate (dukha-sukha aru apamāna-barā'ī). [To wit, do not get excited, emotional, passionate, agitated or angry due to any of these things.]

It is only then that your troubles will be removed (bipati bihā'ī) (3).

Listen to me you foolish and wicked fellow (sunu saṭha)! This body is already under the clutches of ‘Kaal’ (death, time, aging process) (kāla-grasita yaha dēhī). So don't blame anybody for its sufferings (jani tēhi lāgi bidūṣahi kēhī)¹.

[¹To wit, little time is left for you to mend your ways, for this body is fast running out of its fuel and its lifespan that was assigned to it at the time of birth. You can't expect this gross body to cooperate with you much as it is already agitated due to its own set of problems. For instance, its different organs of perception and action have their own set of agenda, and they force the gross external body to condescend to their numerous demands unwittingly. You occupy a superior status in this body as you can control the actions of all the external organs of the body as well as the inclinations of the heart that resides inside it. The latter may have excuses, but you can't hide

behind this smokescreen. So wake up to your responsibilities, and do what it expedient for your as well as my good and welfare.

Remember my dear Mind: You are like a charioteer for this symbolic chariot represented by the body. It is the responsibility of the charioteer to ensure that the chariot is driven properly and in the right direction so as to reach its destination inspite of any inherent problems it may have or it may encounter on the way. You, the Mind, is the seat of wisdom, intellect, discrimination and thinking, and the rest of the body obeys your directions. So you can't absolve yourself of your responsibility.] (4).

Tulsidas warns or advises the creature that without this wisdom and awareness (*tulasidāsa binu asi mati āyē*), Lord Sri Ram cannot be attained by mere deceitful and crooked pretensions of being a devotee, or a saint; or by pretending to sit in a trance like state of 'Samadhi' in order to fool the people and the Lord (*milahiṁ na rāma kapaṭa-lau lāyē*).

[Verily, the Lord is attained only by pure and un-adulterated devotion, affection and love, and not by pretensions, deceit and cunning posturings.] (5).

Lord Rāma's Benevolence & Grace are the Only Solution

(127)

मैं जानी, हरिपद-रति नाही। सपनेहुँ नहिँ बिराग मन माहीं॥१॥
 जे रघुबीर-चरन अनुरागे। तिन्ह सब भोग रोगसम त्यागे॥२॥
 काम-भुजंग डसत जब जाही। बिषय-नीब कटु लगत न ताही॥३॥
 असमंजस अस हृदय बिचारी। बढ़त सोच नित नूतन भारी॥४॥
 जब कब राम-कृपा दुख जाई। तुलसिदास नहिँ आन उपाई॥५॥

(127)

mairṁ jānī, haripada-rati nāhīm. sapanēhum' nahirṁ birāga mana māhīm. 1.
jē raghubīra-carana anurāgē. tinha saba bhōga rōgasama tyāgē. 2.
kāma-bhujaṅga ḍasata jaba jāhī. biṣaya-nīm̐ba kaṭu lagata na tāhī. 3.
asaman̐jasa asa hr̥daya bicārī. baṛhata sōca nita nūtana bhārī. 4.
jaba kaba rāma-kṛpā dukha jā'ī. tulasidāsa nahirṁ āna upā'ī. 5.

Verse no. 127—[Tulsidas admonishes himself and says—] I have come to realise that I have no (true) love and devotion towards the holy feet of Lord Sri Hari (Ram) (*mairṁ jānī, haripada-rati nāhīm*) because my Mana (mind and heart) doesn't have the feeling of renunciation and detachment towards this world even in my dreams (*sapanēhum' nahirṁ birāga mana māhīm*)¹.

[¹To wit, having detachment towards the pleasures of this materialistic world and dispassion in the heart and the mind is the sure test that one has abiding devotion in the Lord's holy feet—for otherwise it is not possible. Now I feel that since I can't claim to be dispassionate towards or detached from the world, I cannot claim to have true devotion and faith in the Lord's holy feet! This fact is clearly and explicitly mentioned in the next stanza herein below.

Remember: Tulsidas uses this indirect method of accusing himself of countless shortcomings throughout this Book of “Vinai Patrika” only as a means to guide us about the various vices we must guard against and the many virtues that we must inculcate in ourselves if we wish for our own spiritual good. Tulsidas was undoubtedly a blessed soul himself, one who was chosen by the Supreme Lord to give his divine message to the rest of the world.

As has been noted earlier also, Tulsidas chose to indict himself instead of pointing fingers at others to avoid controversies and inviting unnecessary wrath and ill-will from jealous peers who would accuse him of pretending to be a holy cow by finding faults with others. His main intention was to convey the Lord’s message to ordinary creatures who seemed lost in the maze of countless doctrines and philosophies with no one to show them the right, easy and correct path selflessly, a path that would give them spiritual happiness, peace and joy in the real sense.] (1).

Those who have love and devotion in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (jē raghubīra-carana anurāgē) are the ones who have abandoned all indulgences in the pleasures of the sense organs and objects of the material world as if they were a symbolic plague or any other infectious disease for the Spirit or the Soul (tinha saba bhōga rōgasama tyāgē). [To wit, those who love and have devotion for the Lord God avoid the gross world and its countless temptations like the plague.] (2).

When any one is bitten by a Kaam-like poisonous serpent (kāma-bhujaṅga ḍasata jaba jāhī), the twig of the Neem tree (the margosa tree) representing pleasures and indulgences does not taste bitter to him when chewed (biṣaya-nīmba kaṭu lagata na tāhī)².

[²It is said that when a man is bitten by a poisonous snake, the Neem leaves do not taste bitter to him when chewed. Here, the passions and lust for the world, known as the Kaam, that are present in the heart of a creature are like the serpent, and the countless temptations arising from the sense objects of sensual pleasure and comfort in the external world are like the twigs of the Neem tree. A person who is free from Kaam would avoid the temptations of the world as they do not seem attractive to him, while a person who harbours Kaam seems not only be attracted to the same set of temptations but would also like to ‘chew’ them or enjoy them, remain engrossed and involved deeply in them, deriving immense pleasure and comfort by this indulgence, and not realising their horrifying consequences for his well-being.] (3).

Thinking of all this, my heart is in a greatly perplexed and on the horns of a dilemma, knowing not what to do (asamarjasa asa hrdaya bicārī)? This has resulted in perplexities and great worries in my mind, which are increasing progressively day by day; I am indeed alarmed by this situation (barhata sōca nita nūtana bhārī) (4).

[Addressing himself, Tulsidas says—] ‘Oh Tulsidas, there is no other way (tulasidāsa nahim āna upā’ī). If ever there is a chance of this worry and torment leaving me, then it would only be made possible by the kindness, grace and benevolence of Lord Sri Ram (jaba kaba rāma-krpā dukha jā’ī).’ (5).

Sins can be Destroyed by Lord's Mercy and Grace Only

(128)

सुमिरु सनेह—सहित सीतापति । रामचरन तजि नहिंन आनि गति ॥1॥
 जप, तप, तीरथ, जोग, समाधी । कलिमति—बिकल, न कछु निरुपाधी ॥2॥
 करतहुँ सुकृत न पाप सिराहीं । रक्तबीज जिमि बाढ़त जाहीं ॥3॥
 हरति एक अघ—असुर—जालिका । तुलसिदास प्रभु—कृपा—कालिका ॥4॥

(128)

sumiru sanēha-sahita sītāpati. rāmacarana taji nahinna āni gati. 1.
 japa, tapa, tīratha, jōga, samādhī. kalimati-bikala, na kachu nirupādhī. 2.
 karatahum' sukṛta na pāpa sirāhīm. rakatabīja jimi bārḥata jāhīm. 3.
 harati ēka agha-asura-jālikā. tulasidāsa prabhu-kṛpā-kālikā. 4.

Verse no. 128—[Continuing from stanza no. 5 of the previous verse no. 127, Tulsidas says that the only way one can have redemption is to remember Lord Ram and have devotion for him from the core of his heart.]

One should remember Lord Sri Ram, the beloved husband of Sita, with the greatest of sincerity, love, faith and devotion (*sumiru sanēha-sahita sītāpati*), because there is no other means by which one can obtain solace, succour and redemption for himself, there is no other place where one can find rest and peace for one's self anywhere in this world and from any other source, except at the holy feet of Lord Ram (*rāmacarana taji nahinna āni gati*) (1).

Of course it is true that there are many other ways to achieve one's spiritual goals (i.e. there are many means of attaining spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation) such as chanting of the Lord's Mantras (known as doing Japa), Tapa (penances, austerities), Tirtha (going on a pilgrimage and visiting holy places), Yoga (meditation), and Samadhi (the trance like state obtained in the higher stages of meditation) etc. (*japa, tapa, tīratha, jōga, samādhī*).

But in Kaliyug (the present era), the mind and the intellect of the creature are not stable as they are always so fickle, agitated, indecisive and corrupt (*kalimati-bikala*), as a result of which all the 'Sadhans' (means, ways, paths, resources that are outlined above) fail to bear desired results as they are not without interference and are subjected to many obstacles or hurdles of one or the other kind that create mammoth problems in the path of success (*na kachu nirupādhī*)¹.

[¹The scriptures have undoubtedly prescribed a number of paths that a spiritual seeker can follow—such as *japa, tapa, tīratha, jōga, samādhī*. But in the present time, all of them have become corrupted and diluted, all of them have become riddled with their own set of problems. So the creature finds it almost impossible to reach his spiritual destination by relying upon them; he falls on the way disenchanted and frustrated.

Therefore, Tulsidas says, why not take the easiest and sure path—which is to have devotion and affection and faith in Lord Ram, and surrender at his holy feet, for then the Lord would extend his helping hand and take the devotee to his destination

by holding his fingers himself like a parent would do for a child who has decided to seek the parent's guidance in his journey to the desired destination.

Refer also to verse no. 129, stanza no. 3 herein below.] (2).

Inspite of doing noble, righteous, scrupulous and meritorious deeds (*karatahum̐ sukṛta*), and possessing noble virtues and characters (*sukṛta*), the sins are not destroyed nowadays, but on the contrary they continue to increase (*na pāpa sirāhīm*).

Like the blood-thirsty demon known as 'Rakatabīja*', these sins continue to arise and increase steadily (*rakatabīja jimi bāṛhata jāhīm*). [This is because the mind is so unstable and corrupt that it sees no merit and goodness even in doing virtuous deeds, and finds merit and virtues in deeds that are abhorable and detestable. The result is that the creature gets all mixed up and does not know what and what not to do.] (3).

[*The story of *Rakatabīja* is described at the end of this verse.]

Tulsidas says that the formidable web of sins, evils and vices so typical of Kaliyug is like a huge army of ferocious demons that can only be destroyed (*harati ēka agha-asura-jālikā*) by the intervention of the Goddess *Kālikā* representing the Lord Ram's grace, kindness, benevolence and mercy, and by no other means whatsoever (*tulasidāsa prabhu-kṛpā-kālikā*)².

[²Goddess *Kālikā* is the goddess of death and destruction. She had killed the demon Rakta-Beej when all others failed. She represents the powerful and dynamic forces of Nature, known as the 'Shakti', which can overcome all demonic, evil, tormenting and tyrannical forces of creation. This 'Shakti' is the dynamic aspect of Brahm, the Supreme Being. In this verse, Tulsidas means that Lord Ram's benevolence and grace are like this all-powerful and potent goddess who can trounce even the fiercest of evils and vices that torment the devotee. All the ferocious spiritual tormentors of the world would leave the devotee alone if the latter is wise enough to seek shelter with Lord Ram.] (4).

[Note—*Demon *Rakatabīja*: A cunning, trickster demon called Rakta Beej took a boon from Shiva that if a single drop of his blood fell on the ground, it would produce thousands of Rakta Beej demons like him. [Rakta = Blood; Beej = Seed. Literally it means that each drop of his blood acted as a seed or a nuclei to produce thousands of similar demons. Thus, all attempts to kill him were defeated.]

Becoming fearless and feeling invincible at this incredible boon, he unleashed a reign of terror and horrors unparalleled in history. The Gods prayed to goddess Parvati who manifested as the black, blood drinking goddess 'Mahakali' (i.e. the great goddess of death) who was unique in having a very long blood thirsty, parched, sponge-like tongue. She fought a fierce battle with Rakta Beej; when blood poured or spurted from his wounds, she would elongate her tongue sufficiently long enough to swap it before it could touch the ground. By this ruse, she managed to kill him by overcoming the boon. This story appears in 'Durga Sapt Sati'.]

(129)

रुचिर रसना तू राम राम राम क्यों न रटत ।
 सुमिरत सुख—सुकृत बढ़त, अघ—अमंगल घटत ।।1।।
 बिनु श्रम कलि—कलुष—जाल कटु कराल कटत ।
 दिनकरके उदय जैसे तिमिर—तोम फटत ।।2।।
 जोग, जाग, जप, बिराग, तप, सुतीरथ—अटत ।
 बाँधबेको भव—गयंद रेनुकी रजु बटत ।।3।।
 परिहरि सुर—मनि सुनाम, गुंजा लखि लटत ।
 लालच लघु तेरो लखि, तुलसि तोहि हटत ।।4।।

(129)

rucira rasanā tū rāma rāma rāma kyōm na raṭata.
 sumirata sukha-sukṛta baṛhata, agha-amaṅgala ghaṭata. 1.
 binu śrama kali-kaluṣa-jāla kaṭu karāla kaṭata.
 dinakarakē udaya jaisē timira-tōma phaṭata. 2.
 jōga, jāga, japa, birāga, tapa, sutīratha-aṭata.
 bāmdhabēkō bhava-gayanda rēnukī raju baṭata. 3.
 parihari sura-mani sunāma, guṅjā lakhi laṭata.
 lālaca laghu tērō lakhi, tulasi tōhim haṭata. 4.

Verse no. 129—Oh you sweet Tongue¹ (rucira rasanā), why don't you chant 'rāma rāma rāma' repeatedly and incessantly (tū rāma rāma rāma kyōm na raṭata), the mere remembrance of which holy name or the mere utterance of this holy word exponentially increases happiness, joy, noble virtues and merits manifold times (sumirata sukha-sukṛta baṛhata), while at the same time the numerous sins, evils and inauspiciousness are decreased in the same proportion (agha-amaṅgala ghaṭata)².

[¹Refer also to verse no. 237 and 247 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where Tulsidas has given a similar advice to the Tongue.

²Refer verse no. 130 herein below.] (1).

By remembering Lord Sri Ram's holy name, the terrible and fierce web of Kaliyug-induced sins and vices are removed without making much of an effort (or by the least effort) (binu śrama kali-kaluṣa-jāla kaṭu karāla kaṭata) even as darkness is torn apart (i.e. shattered, removed) on the appearance of the sun (dinakarakē udaya jaisē timira-tōma phaṭata)³.

[³Just as the darkness of the night disappears automatically when the sun appears in the sky so do all the spiritual tormentors disappear as soon as Lord Ram's holy name is remembered and invoked.] (2).

Abandoning Lord Sri Ram's holy name and relying on Jōga (Yoga; meditation and concentration), Jāga (Yagya; fire and other religious sacrifices), Japa (chanting of the Lord's various Mantras), Birāga (Vairagya; renunciation), Tapa (austerities, penances), and Sutīratha (pilgrimage) to attain freedom from one's spiritual

sufferings is akin to trying to tame a wild elephant by using a rope made from particles of sand (bāmḍhabēkō bhava-gayanda rēnukī raju baṭata)⁴.

[⁴To wit, just as it is impossible to tie an elephant with a rope made of sand particles, so it is also impossible to find spiritual peace and deliverance from the world by employing any one or all of the methods outlined here, without relying solely on the potent powers of Lord Sri Ram's holy name. For in all sooth, Lord Ram's holy name is the only panacea that can give all the benefits one expects from all these listed exercises, but without having to undergo their hardships and uncertainties.] (3).

Leaving aside the beautiful and priceless gem called “sura-mani”, also known as the ‘Chintamani’⁵ (a gem belonging to the Gods which is said to remove all sorts of worries) that is symbolised by the sweet and holy name of the Lord (parihari sura-mani sunāma), you look covetously and greedily elsewhere, tempted by the charms of the seeds of the worthless ‘gunjā’ (seeds of a shrub called abrus presotorius) which represent the pleasures of the sensual objects of the world (gunjā lakhi laṭata).

I, Tulsidas, have decided to sternly warn and admonish you (tulasi tōhim haṭata) when I observe your foolishness and your meanness in the way you are tempted by such worthless things as the attractions of the gross perishable world and waste your time in thinking and talking about them at the cost of the priceless jewel symbolised by Lord Ram's holy name which you seem to have abandoned (lālaca laghu tērō lakhi) (4).

[⁵Chintamani: Refer also to verse nos. 105, 116, 235.]

Lord Rāma's Holy Name

(130)

राम राम, राम राम, राम राम, जपत ।
मंगल-मुद उदित होत, कलि-मल-छल छपत ॥1॥
कहु के लहे फल रसाल, बबुर बीज बपत ।
हारहि जनि जनम जाय गाल गूल गपत ॥2॥
काल, करम, गुन, सुभाउ सबके सीस तपत ।
राम-नाम-महिमा की चरचा चले चपत ॥3॥
साधन बिनु सिद्धि सकल बिकल लोग लपत ।
कलिजुग बर बनिज बिपुल नाम-नगर खपत ॥4॥
नाम सों प्रतीति-प्रीति हृदय सुथिर थपत ।
पावन किये रावन-रिपु तुलसिहु-से अपत ॥5॥

(130)

rāma rāma, rāma rāma, rāma rāma, japata.
maṅgala-muda udita hōta, kali-mala-chala chapata. 1.
kahu kē lahē phala rasāla, babura bīja bapata.
hārahi jani janama jāya gāla gūla gapata. 2.

kāla, karama, guna, subhā'u sabakē sīsa tapata.
 rāma-nāma-mahimā kī caracā calē capata. 3.
 sādhana binu sid'dhi sakala bikala lōga lapata.
 kalijuga bara baniya bipula nāma-nagara khapata. 4.
 nāma sōm pratīti-prīti hṛdaya suthira thapata.
 pāvana kiyē rāvana-ripu tulasihu-sē apata. 5.

Verse no. 130—[Continuing his advice to the Tongue, Tulsidas says—] By constantly remembering and repeating (or chanting—“japata”) Lord Sri Ram's holy name “rāma rāma, rāma rāma, rāma rāma”, all sorts of goodnesses, auspiciousness, welfare, happiness and joy arise and become ascendant (maṅgala-muda udita hōta), while sins, evils, deceit, crookedness and other faults and defects of Kaliyug go into hiding or become obscure (kali-mala-chala chapata)¹ (1).

[¹Refer also to verse no. 129.]

Has anyone ever got the Mango fruit by sowing seeds of the Babul tree (the acacia plant) (kahu kē lahē phala rasāla, babura bīja bapata)?

Hence, don't waste your rare-to-obtain human birth by futile chatter, heresy, tattle, gossip and boastful talk (hārahi jani janama jāya gāla gūla gapata). [Because such activities only go to waste your precious time and breath, and give no positive results that could do good to you. Therefore, you will be well advised if you abandon all this, and instead use your tongue and time and breath in invoking the Lord's grace and remembering his holy name as this exercise would certainly provide you with auspiciousness and all round welfare.] (2).

The negative effects (i.e. the many sort of agitations, problems, torments, sufferings etc.) associated with ‘Kaal’ (death; time; circumstances), ‘Karma’ (deeds), ‘Guna’ (qualities, character traits) and ‘Swabhaava’ (temperament, natural inclinations, habit, inherent tendencies) are constantly tormenting all the creatures as if it were some fever burning in the head (kāla, karama, guna, subhā'u sabakē sīsa tapata). [To wit, everyone is suffering due to their evil effects just like one suffers when he has high fever.]

In this situation, Lord Ram's holy name and stories of his glories act like a soothing balm, for as soon as they are invoked the various agitations and restlessness subside, and the creature finds rest and peace (rāma-nāma-mahimā kī caracā calē capata)².

[²When a person is suffering from high fever and has a severe headache, a cool pad or a block of ice is applied on his forehead to bring down the fever and give relief from the headache. This is in addition to the medicines given to him. Likewise, when a creature is suffering from so much horrors created by Kaliyug, and is not finding any relief inspite of practicing so many methods prescribed by the scriptures, the easiest and the best way for him is to repeat the holy name of Lord Ram as it would instantly give him peace and rest.

Therefore, it is wise and recommended that one should repeat Lord Ram's holy name and remember the Lord's glories in order to neutralise the spiritual torments from which the creature suffers. Just like a person takes a medicine as well as applies a cold pad on his forehead to get quick relief from the sufferings caused by high fever, a creature would find peace and bliss when he remembers Lord Ram and

his holy name in addition to following other methods prescribed by the scriptures.] (3).

The people are eager to obtain all ‘Siddhis’ (achievements, successes, special powers, endowments) without having any proper means or wherewithal to do so—how is this possible (sādhana binu sid'dhi sakala bikala lōga lapata)?

The hoard of bad merchandise accumulated by Kaliyug are all consumed in the city of Lord Sri Ram's name (kalijuga bara baniya bipula nāma-nagara khapata).

[To wit, the treasure of sins hoarded by Kaliyug are like a trader's stock of bad merchandise that he wishes to sell off at the earliest because they would go down in price the longer they are left to rot in his godown. Lord Ram's holy name is like the city where all such things are consumed at the earliest by the potential powers and effects of Lord Sri Ram's holy name.] (4).

The heart becomes fully satisfied, blissful and stable by having faith, belief, devotion, reverence and love for Lord Sri Ram's holy name (nāma sōm pratīti-prīti hrdaya suthira thapata).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, Lord Sri Ram's holy name is so powerful and purifying that it gave peace and deliverance to even a ferocious enemy of the world, the cruel, sinful and vile demon named Ravana, the demon king of Lanka (pāvana kiyē rāvana-ripu), as well as to the most humble, poor, fallen and lowly person such as Tulsidas (tulasihu-sē apata)².

[²The main idea here is that Lord Ram's holy name benefits all the creatures irrespective of who they are. Even the most sinful, vile and fallen can get the same spiritual reward by invoking Lord Ram's holy name as is granted to those who are better and more righteous. It is like the case of a medicine taken for fever: the correct medicine would cure the disease irrespective of who takes it, of what gender, age, temperament, social standing etc. he or she is, and on whose given this advice.

Ravana was a very wicked and cruel demon. But even he got liberation and deliverance for himself by remembering Lord Ram constantly, albeit he did so out of fear for his life and treating Lord Ram as his arch enemy.

Another example is of Tulsidas—for he says that he is among the most humble and ordinary people in the world, but by the grace of Lord Ram and the Lord's holy name he too has found his peace and happiness.] (5).

Lord Rāma's Holy Name and Lotus-Feet

(131)

पावन प्रेम राम—चरन—कमल जनम लाहु परम ।
 रामनाम लेत होत, सुलभ सकल धरम ॥1॥
 जोग, मख, बिबेक, बिरति, बेद—बिदित करम ।
 करिबे कहँ कटु कठोर, सुनत मधुर, नरम ॥2॥
 तुलसि सुनि, जानि—बूझि, भूलहि जनि भरम ।
 तेहि प्रभुको होहि, जाहि सब ही की सरम ॥3॥

(131)

pāvana prēma rāma-carana-kamala janama lāhu parama.
 rāmanāma lēta hōta, sulabha sakala dharama. 1.
 jōga, makha, bibēka, birati, bēda-bidita karama.
 karibē kaham̐ kaṭu kaṭhōra, sunata madhura, narama. 2.
 tulasi suni, jāni-būjhi, bhūlahi jani bharama.
 tēhi prabhukō hōhi, jāhi saba hī kī sarama. 3.

Verse no. 131—The supreme or the best fruit and the spiritual reward that can be obtained for being born as a human being in this life is to have selfless, sincere, naturally pure and deceitless love, affection and devotion in the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (pāvana prēma rāma-carana-kamala janama lāhu parama).

Similarly, all the fruits obtainable by adhering to ‘Dharma’ (i.e. leading a taintless life of scrupulousness in accordance with the principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, noble thought and conduct) are accessible instantly by uttering Lord Sri Ram's holy name (rāmanāma lēta hōta, sulabha sakala dharama) (1).

The Vedas (the primary and ancient scriptures) have prescribed many paths such as meditation, rituals, elaborate sacrifices, wisdom, acquisition of knowledge discrimination and renunciation etc. (jōga, makha, bibēka, birati, bēda-bidita karama) which are all pleasant to hear about and potentially beneficial as well (sunata madhura, narama), but the problem is that they are most difficult to practice and are also ridden with or interrupted by many hurdles and obstacles that make their implementation hazardous and almost impossible (karibē kaham̐ kaṭu kaṭhōra)¹.

[¹To wit, it is easy to talk about and preach of the many spiritual paths, philosophies and doctrines detailed in the Vedas and other scriptures, but to put them into practice is like a nightmare and well nigh impossible. So, the solution, and the easiest one at that, is to have devotion for Lord Ram and the Lord's holy feet, as well to remember the Lord and invoke his holy name.

Refer verse no. 128, stanza no. 2 in this context.] (2).

Therefore, oh Tulsidas, don't be lost in the maze created by this illusion (regarding the attainment of your spiritual goal by trying to follow or hopping between the countless options mentioned herein above that are like the shimmering mirage in the desert) because they would cause distraction for you and divert you from your true goal in life (tulasi suni, jāni-būjhi, bhūlahi jani bharama).

Be wise and become an ardent devotee of the Lord who cares for all (tēhi prabhukō hōhi, jāhi saba hī kī sarama)².

[²To wit, do not be misled that these paths prescribed by the Vedas will give you salvation or liberate you from the vicious cycle of birth and death—you'll land in a quagmire of doing formal rituals and countless exercises that will lead you nowhere. Hence, you will be best advised to adopt the easy, simple, infallible and time-tested path of chanting Lord Sri Ram's holy name, and having devotion and love for the Lord.] (3).

Advice to the creature

(132)

राम—से प्रीतमकी प्रीति—रहित जीव जाय जियत ।
 जेहि सुख सुख मानि लेत, सुख सो समुझ कियत ।।1।।
 जहँ—जहँ जेहि जोनि जनम महि, पताल, बियत ।
 तहँ—तहँ तू बिषय—सुखहिं, चहत लहत नियत ।।2।।
 कत बिमोह लट्यो, फट्यो गगन मगन सियत ।
 तुलसि प्रभु—सुजस गाइ, क्यों न सुधा पियत ।।3।।

(132)

rāma-sē prītamakī prīti-rahita jīva jāya jiyata.
 jēhi sukha sukha māni lēta, sukha sō samujha kiyata. 1.
 jaham̐-jaham̐ jēhi jōni janama mahi, patāla, biyata.
 taham̐-taham̐ tū biṣaya-sukhahim̐, cahata lahata niyata. 2.
 kata bimōha laṭyō, phaṭyō gagana magana siyata.
 tulasi prabhu-sujasa gā'i, kyōm̐ na sudhā piyata. 3.

Verse no. 132—By not having love, affection and devotion for an affectionate, loving, caring, dearest and most adorable Lord such as Sri Ram (rāma-sē prītamakī prīti-rahita), this creature lives a futile life (jīva jāya jiyata).

Ah! The sense or feeling of comfort, joy and happiness that you seem to derive from the things in this gross material world for which you are so enchanted (jēhi sukha sukha māni lēta)—just think how much worth and how lasting is that comfort, joy and happiness (sukha sō samujha kiyata)?¹.

[¹This world is mortal and perishable, and so is the life of the creature in it. Neither lives forever. So, what is the use of pursuing a thing that is sure to come to an end one day. Besides this, the comfort, joy and happiness that seems to come from this world also brings along with them a train of problems, troubles and sorrows. In the ultimate the creature lands in more miseries than he would had he not allowed himself to be tempted by the false charms of the world and its sensual objects. The world is like a slippery marsh, a quagmire or quicksand—you try to take one foot out and the other sinks deeper in it. Why not then opt for something that holds fast, that gives lasting peace and comfort for the soul; something that not only makes life easy and peaceful while a creature is alive and also pave for his deliverance and salvation when his time is up in the gross world?] (1).

In whichever womb you took birth (by the virtue of the deeds done by you in your previous life, by the many unfulfilled desires and unrequited longings you had, and other factors that determine your destiny) (jaham̐-jaham̐ jēhi jōni janama)—whether in the subterranean world as an underground or an aquatic creature, in the terrestrial world as a reptile, a legged animal or a human being, and the aerial world

such as being born as a bird or insect (*mahi, patāla, biyata*)—you had the chance to receive and enjoy as much as you could all the pleasures, comforts and joys of the sense objects (*taham̐-taham̐ tū biṣaya-sukhahim̐*) that you had desired for in each of these numerous births according to your subtle inclinations, hidden desires and secret wishes (*cahata lahata niyata*). [But say, you were not contented and satisfied anywhere by anything.] (2).

Say, why are you so stupidly engrossed and keeping yourself occupied in trying to stitch a torn sky under the influence of delusions (*kata bimōha laṭyō, phaṭyō gagana magana siyata*)?

[That is to say, even as it is ridiculous and madness to imagine that one can sew the sky as it is impossible to do so, likewise it is also impossible to have happiness and peace by indulgences in the gratification of the sense organs of one's body, as well as in the pursuance of the sense objects of this gross material world in the hope that pleasures and joys can be derived from them.]

Therefore, oh Tulsidas, if you are really eager to have supreme bliss, peace, happiness and joy, then why don't you drink the nectar that would provide them to you (*tulasi -- kyōm na sudhā piyata*) by way of singing and narrating the divine stories of Lord Sri Ram that contain the magnificent glories, the excellent virtues, the beautiful characters and the numerous fine deeds and fascinating episodes related to the Lord (because by doing so you can derive eternal peace and bliss for yourself and also become a living example for others to follow who seek this spiritual nectar (*prabhu-sujasa gā'i*) (3).

Lord Rāma's Holy Feet

(133)

तोसो हौं फिरि फिरि हित, प्रिय पुनीत सत्य बचन कहत ।
 सुनि मन, गुनि, समुझि, क्यों न सुगम सुभग गहत ॥1॥
 छोटो बड़ो, खोटो खरो, जग जो जहँ रहत ।
 अपनो अपने को भलो कहहु, को न चहत ॥2॥
 बिधि लागि लघु कीट अवधि सुख सुखी, दुख दहत ।
 पसु लौं पसुपाल ईस बाँधत छोरत नहत ॥3॥
 बिषय मुद निहार भार सिर काँधे ज्यों बहत ।
 योंही जिय जानि, मानि सठ! तू साँसति सहत ॥4॥
 पायो केहि घृत बिचारु, हरिन-बारि महत ।
 तुलसी तकु ताहि सरन, जाते सब लहत ॥5॥

(133)

tōsō haum̐ phiri phiri hita, priya punīta satya bacana kahata.
 suni mana, guni, samujhi, kyōm na sugama subhaga gahata. 1.
 chōṭō barō, khōṭō kharō, jaga jō jaham̐ rahata.
 apanō apanē kō bhalō kahahu, kō na cahata. 2.
 bidhi lagi laghu kīṭa avadhi sukha sukhī, dukha dahata.

pasu laurṁ pasupāla īsa bāṁdhata chōrata nahata. 3.
 biṣaya muda nihāra bhāra sira kām̐dhē jyōm bahata.
 yōnhī jiya jāni, māni saṭha! tū sām̐sati sahata. 4.
 pāyō kēhi ghr̥ta bicāru, harina-bāri mahata.
 tulasī taku tāhi sarana, jātē saba lahata. 5.

Verse no. 133—Oh you Creature! I repeatedly tell you what is for you general welfare and good (tōsō haurṁ phiri phiri hita); I speak words that are true, sweet and pure, and without any malafide, deceitful or crooked intentions of any kind (priya punīta satya bacana kahata).

Inspite of hearing them, inspite of being able to understand, think and discuss over them so as to determine their truthfulness, merit and effectiveness in general as well as their long-term benefits for you (suni mana, guni, samujhi), it is such an irony that you still prefer to neglect my advice, turn a deaf ear to them, and opt not to practice them in your life. It's a wonder why you do not adopt (or follow) an easy and hassle-free path that I prescribe for you (kyōm̐ na sugama subhaga gahata)?

[And what is that path? Well, it is as simple as taking refuge in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram, for then all your spiritual problems and miseries associated with existence in this gross mortal world would be taken care of. The Lord would surely take care of your welfare and good, your peace and happiness, but you are so stupid as to refuse to follow my sane advice, for perhaps you think I have some sort of vested interest in it!] (1).

The big and the small, the wicked, the crooked and the fallen as well as the pious, the righteous and the holy (chōtō barō, khōtō kharō, jaga jō jaham̐ rahata)—tell me which living being in this world, no matter where or in what condition he lives, would not like to see good being done to him, would not like to have welfare for himself, or secure a favourable future for himself? Say, who does not want to have his own welfare and well-being? (apanō apanē kō bhalō kahahu, kō na cahata) (2).

Right from Brahma (the cosmic Creator) to the tiniest of creatures (e.g. the one-celled amoeba)—all feel happy and joyous during favourable circumstances in life, and get agitated and sorrowful when faced with adversities and discomfort (bidhi lagi laghu kīṭa avadhi sukha sukhī, dukha dahata).

Like a herdsman, the Parmatma (the Supreme Being) keeps all living beings under his care and control. The Parmatam ties the creature (with the rope of ignorance and delusions), unties him (with wisdom, intellect, discrimination, enlightenment etc.), and puts him to work according to their abilities and needs of the day just like the herdsman ties his herd of domesticated cattle in the shed, feeds them, gives them rest, puts them to work in his field or takes them to graze, and in general takes care of his flock (pasu laurṁ pasupāla īsa bāṁdhata chōrata nahata)¹.

[¹The 'rope' that ties a creature to this world is 'ignorance and delusion'. 'Freedom' from this bondage is obtained by acquisition of 'wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment' that comes with application of intelligence and discrimination. The various 'deeds' (known as Karma) that a creature does is like the cattle being yoked to the plough or the cart by the herdsman to plough his field or carry his goods; this is the 'work' that the creature does.

Now, if the animal does its assigned work properly and in accordance to the wishes of the herdsman, the latter rewards the former by giving him good food and

rest and in general takes better care of the animal, but if the latter is lazy, careless and does not work properly, the herdsman uses the stick and neglects about its food and comfort. Likewise, if the creature acts with wisdom and leads a righteous life, the Lord takes special care of his well-being and happiness, but if the creature is wild and acts rashly then the Lord punishes him according to the Law of Karma which states that one is rewarded or punished according to his own deeds.] (3).

Have a look at the pleasures derived from the sense objects of this material world (*biṣaya muda nihāra*)—they are like transferring the burden of the head on one's shoulders (i.e. the body will have to suffer from the weight of this load notwithstanding that it was shifted from the head to the shoulder) (*bhāra sira kāmḍhē jyōm bahata*).

Oh you stupid fellow (*saṭha*)! Be convinced in your heart and pay heed to my advice that the way you are engrossed in pursuing the pleasures of this gross mundane world of sense objects is similar to the example cited herein above (*yōnhī jiya jāni, māni*). Why are you allowing yourself to suffer these torments and tribulations out of your misplaced sense of wisdom (*tū sāmṣati sahata*)?²

[²To wit, you allow yourself to be attracted to and get engaged with the numerous pleasures that you derive from the sense objects in this world with a hope that it would help to provide you with some sort of comfort and relief from the countless problems and miseries arising from the grind of daily life in this gross world. But in your ignorance you forget that this is only a diversionary tactic of your ill-advised mind because the charms of the world pull you into a vortex of attachments and longings that go on increasing day by day, and instead of alleviating your problems they add more fuel to the already burning fire, for your mind would be swaying ever more wildly and lose whatever little peace it would otherwise have had.

Remember: The relief that you seem to get by enjoying the pleasures obtained from the material things of this gross world is a temporary phenomenon, for sooner or later you would have to face the same old pain and misery from which you had been sufferings from all the while. It is like 'shifting the burden of the head to the shoulder' because your true self, your soul, still continues to suffer from the many horrors associated with the cycle of birth and death and its related miseries and sorrows.

To cite an example, a man takes a pain-killer tablet to overcome some severe pain from which he is suffering due to some serious underlying disease. But the relief from pain is only transient because as soon as the effect of the pain-killer wears off, the pain returns with a vengeance. The only right solution in this case is to treat the disease itself.] (4).

My dear, just have a thought—who has ever got Ghee (or clarified butter) by churning the water of a mirage (*pāyō kēhi ghṛta bicāru, harina-bāri mahata*)? [Butter is got by churning milk, and not water. To expect to get butter by churning water is madness in the first place, and then it is the height of absurdity and nonsense to expect to have butter from a non-existent source such as water in a desert mirage! That is to say, one cannot expect to have true happiness by indulging in the pleasures of this illusionary world.]

[Addressing himself, Tulsidas says—] Oh Tulsidas! You should go to the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (to seek shelter and refuge there) (*tulasī taku tāhi sarana*) from where everything that you wish to have for your good and happiness are easily attainable and readily available (*jātē saba lahata*) (5).

Lord Rāma's Benevolent Nature

(134)

ताते हैं बार बार देव! द्वार परि पुकार करत।
 आरति, नति, दीनता कहें प्रभु संकट हरत॥1॥
 लोकपाल सोक—बिकल रावन—डर डरत।
 का सुनि सकुचे कृपालु नर—सरीर धरत॥2॥
 कौसिक, मुनि—तीय, जनक सोच—अनल जरत।
 साधन केहि सीतल भये, सो न समुझि परत॥3॥
 केवट, खग, सबरि सहज चरनकमल न रत।
 सनमुख तोहिं होत नाथ! कुतुरु सुफरु फरत॥4॥
 बंधु—बैर कपि—बिभीषन गुरु गलानि गरत।
 सेवा केहि रीझि राम, किये सरिस भरत॥5॥
 सेवक भयो पवनपूत साहिब अनुहरत।
 ताको लिये नाम राम सब को सुढर ढरत॥6॥
 जाने बिनु राम—रीति पचि पचि जग मरत।
 परिहरि छल सरन गये तुलसिहु—से तरत॥7॥

(134)

tātē haum̐ bāra bāra dēva! dvāra pari pukāra karata.
 āraṭi, nati, dīnatā kahēm̐ prabhu saṅkaṭa harata. 1.
 lōkapāla sōka-bikala rāvana-ḍara ḍarata.
 kā suni sakucē kṛpālu nara-sarīra dharata. 2.
 kausika, muni-tīya, janaka sōca-anala jarata.
 sādhana kēhi sītala bhayē, sō na samujhi parata. 3.
 kēvaṭa, khaga, sabari sahaja caranakamala na rata.
 sanamukha tōhim̐ hōta nātha! kutaru supharu pharata. 4.
 bandhu-baira kapi-bibhīṣana guru galāni garata.
 sēvā kēhi rījhi rāma, kiyē sarisa bharata. 5.
 sēvaka bhayō pavanapūta sāhiba anuharata.
 tākō liyē nāma rāma saba kō suḍhara ḍharata. 6.
 jānē binu rāma-rīti paci paci jaga marata.
 parihari chala sarana gayē tulasihu-sē tarata. 7.

Verse no. 134—Oh Lord (dēva)! I am lying at your doorstep (i.e. I have come to surrender before you and seek your shelter—“dvāra pari”) and earnestly plead before you repeatedly (haum̐ bāra bāra pukāra karata) because (tātē) I have firm faith and conviction that you instantly remove all the miseries, grief, troubles and tribulations of your devotees (prabhu saṅkaṭa harata) when you hear about their sorrows, their pitiable condition and their distressful cries for help and protection (āraṭi, nati, dīnatā kahēm̐) (1).

[Now, I will cite some instances to support my views and tell you why I am so convinced of this glorious virtue of yours.] When Indra (the king of Gods), Kuber (the treasurer of Gods) and other custodians of the world became agitated, terrified and full of sorrow and distress out of the demon king Ravana's fear (*lōkapāla sōka-bikala rāvana-ḍara ḍarata*), then oh merciful Lord, what special thing it was which you had heard of that made you decide to adopt a human body (and manifest yourself in the form of Lord Sri Ram) (*kā suni sakucē kṛpālu nara-sarīra dharata*)¹?

[¹This incident is described in detail in Tulsidas' epic book "Ram Charit Manas" in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 181—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 187.

To wit, the Gods had also simply gone to you and pleaded about their miserable condition before you. They had not specifically asked you to become a human being and come down to earth to eliminate the cruel demons led by their king Ravana. But you did so out of your own free will as you thought that it was your duty and responsibility to give protection to these Gods who have come to seek your shelter against the tyranny unleashed by the demons, inspite of your knowing well that it would entail a lot of hardships for you personally. Likewise, I too am requesting you to give me your protection against all the miseries I am facing in this world, and help me attain peace and happiness of my soul. I am sure and fully convinced that you will do whatever is necessary for my good and welfare.] (2).

I fail to understand how and using what means (*sō na samujhi parata*) sage Vishwamitra (*kausika*), Ahilya (*muni-tīya*) and Janak², who were being burnt in the fire of worries (*janaka sōca-anala jarata*), were calmed and comforted (i.e. relieved from there perpetual sorrows) (*sādhana kēhi sītala bhayē*)?

[²Sage Vishwamitra had been suffering at the hands of the demons who used to defile his fire sacrifice. So he had gone to Ayodhya and brought Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman who had protected the sage's fire sacrifice by killing all the attacking demons. This story is narrated in the book "Ram Charit Manas" in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 206—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 210.

Ahilya was the wife of sage Gautam. She had been turned into a rock due to some curse. Lord Ram had given her liberation from this curse even without her asking for it by touching the rock with his divine feet. This story is narrated in the book "Ram Charit Manas", Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.

King Janak had organised a bow-breaking ceremony to marry his daughter Sita with the warrior who would be successful in breaking the designated bow. All the great and mighty kings and princes of the time had come, but no one was able to as much as move the bow a fraction of an inch, what to lift and break it. Janak was extremely distressed and sorrowful. At this juncture, Lord Ram had broken the bow on the instructions of sage Vishwamitra and thereby remove all sorrows of Janak though the latter had not expressly asked the Lord to do so and help him overcome his miserable condition. Refer also to verse no. 138, stanza no. 2 of this book Vinai Patrika. This story is narrated in "Ram Charit Manas", Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 263.] (3).

Guha Nishad (the chief of the boatman community—"kēvaṭa"), the bird (vulture Jatau, the crow Kagbhusund—"khaga"), Sabari (the tribal woman) etc. were not

naturally inclined to have devotion towards your holy feet (*sahaja caranakamala na rata*).

But, oh Lord, as soon as they had come in front of you, these lowly and sinful creatures immediately became blessed ones like trees that are fortunate to be laden with sweet and succulent fruits (*sanamukha tōhim hōta nātha! kutaru supharu pharata*)³.

[³That is to say, as soon as Guha, Jatau and Sabari came in contact with you, not only all their past sins were neutralised and forgiven but they also became extremely fortunate and blessed ones. Normally they wouldn't have had any chance of ever getting liberation from the burden of their lowly birth which they had got as a consequence of their past sins and evil lives, but it so happened that when they came in contact with you all their past and present sins and misdemeanours were forgiven, and they became eligible for attaining liberation and deliverance that is available to great sages and hermits who obtain this privilege after doing a lot many religious practices and observing the strictest of vows.

Guha Nishad was a boatman who took Lord Ram, his wife Sita and brother Laxman across the river Ganges at the time the Lord was on his way to the forest. Guha had not done any religious activity through his life, and he led an ordinary life of a boatman who fed his family by taking people across the river in a routine manner. But the Lord felt so obliged of him that he blessed him with the fruit of having devotion for the Lord God, and also promised Guha a lifetime of friendship as long as he lived and salvation for his soul after death. This story is narrated in “Ram Charit Manas”, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 20.

Jatau was a vulture by birth, but he befriended Lord Ram when the Lord was passing through a dense forest. Later on, Jatau had laid down his life in an attempt to protect Sita from her abductor Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, while the latter was taking her away. Lord Ram felt so overwhelmed with this gesture and devotion of Jatau that he not only gave him liberation and deliverance from his lowly body of a vulture but did his last rites himself as if Jatau was the Lord's own father. This story is narrated in “Ram Charit Manas”, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 13; and Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Doha no. 32.

Sabari was an old, illiterate and low-caste tribal woman. She had been cast out by the society and had spent her life in the forest with the hope of meeting her beloved Lord Ram before her death. The Lord obliged her by visiting her at her hermitage. He preached her the nine-fold path of devotion and then blessed her with liberation from her mortal coil and deliverance of her soul. This story is narrated in “Ram Charit Manas”, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.

All these three sinful and evil creatures were freed of their sins, faults, evils and all worldly bondages on contact with Lord Ram and were bestowed with bliss, emancipation and salvation which are tantamount to the sweet fruits that a tree bears.] (4).

Sugriv and Vibhishan were being subjected to immense mental agony and suffered a lot due to the hostile attitude and animosity that they had developed against their own elder brothers (*bandhu-baira kapi-bibhīṣana guru galāni garata*)⁴.

But oh gracious Lord, you had been kind to accept them as if they were your own brothers, and treated them at par with Bharat who was your younger brother and whom you loved very much (*kiyē sarisa bharata*). Say, tell me Lord Ram, what was

so special with these two gentlemen, or what special service or deed had they done that made them so dear to you that you treated them with the same affection as you had for your dear brother Bharat (*sēvā kēhi rījhi rāma -- kiyē sarisa bharata*)?

[⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Doha no. 11 (regarding Sugriv); (ii) Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 40—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50 (regarding Vibhishan); (iii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 8.

Both Sugriv, the prince of the monkey race and the younger brother of Baali who was the king of the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha, and Vibhishan who was the younger brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka, were thrown out of the respective kingdoms by their elder brothers Baali and Ravana. Both had sought protection, refuge and shelter with Lord Ram who not only readily accepted them as one of his closest friends and advisors but also restored them to their rightful place in their kingdoms and even declared that they were as dear to him as was Bharat.

The story of Sugriv: He was the younger brother of Baali, the king of the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha. Once it so happened that a demon named Mayavi came to challenge Baali in the middle of the night. Baali went to pursue the challenger who ran away and entered a cave. Baali followed the demon in, but asked his younger brother Sugriv to guard the mouth of the cave. When one month elapsed and Baali did not come out, but instead Sugriv saw a stream of blood flowing out of the cave, he was sore affright, thinking that the demon had killed his elder brother and would now come to kill him. So Sugriv put a huge boulder on the mouth of the cave to close it as best he could and fled. When the ministers found that the throne had fallen vacant, they anointed Sugriv as the king of Kishkindha, though he did not wish to become a king but had to accept the offer most reluctantly so that there was no chaos and rivalry for the throne.

Baali in the meantime killed the demon, and it was the demon's blood that had streamed out of the cave that was mistaken by Sugriv to be of his brother's. When Baali returned to Kishkindha and saw Sugriv as the king, he however lost all cool, and a grave misunderstanding took root in his heart, for he thought that the heavy boulder put on the mouth of the cave was put there purposely by Sugriv so he could grab the throne. Baali was so peeved and angry that he beat Sugriv black and blue and expelled him from the kingdom for all times. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos.1-11 that precedes Doha no. 6.

The story of Vibhishan: Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana and a devout devotee of the Lord in the form of Sri Ram. He was like an oasis of devotion, faith and love in the desert of demons and their reckless misdemeanours and cruelties. He had advised Ravana that Sri Ram was no ordinary prince, and that Sita should be returned to Ram if Ravana wished to save Lanka and himself from total destruction. This advice annoyed Ravana who kicked Vibhishan and ordered him to leave his city. Vibhishan was very exasperated by his brother's behaviour of insulting in in full court, and so in consternation and indignation he decided to go and seek refuge with Lord Ram. The Lord not only warmly welcomed him in his camp but also anointed him as the next king of Lanka. The story of Vibhishan and his surrender to Lord Ram, and his subsequent anointment by the Lord as the next king of Lanka has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.] (5).

The Son of the Wind-God (i.e. Hanuman, who was also a monkey by birth and a minister of Sugriv) had served you so devotedly, faithfully and diligently that in due course of time you had yourself praised him in most laudatory terms, almost erasing any distinction between yourself and him by affectionately embracing him and declaring that you would ever remain obliged to him (*sēvaka bhayō pavanapūta sāhiba anuharata*)⁵.

In fact, you were so pleased with Hanuman and filled with so much gratitude for him (though he was a humble creature like the rest of your devotees and those who served you) (*sāhiba anuharata*) that if anyone pronounced the name of ‘Hanuman’, you felt very glad and blessed that person as if he was praising and paying his obeisance to you (*tākō liyē nāma rāma saba kō suḍhara ḍharata*).

[⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 33; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33.] (6).

[How come all these developments happened? Surely oh Lord, you had done all these because you were moved by the humility, sorrows, miseries, distress of your above named devotees—as it is well established that you are most kind-hearted and love your devotees no end. If this be true, then —]

Hence oh Lord! Unaware of or ignorant of the basic and simple rules that please you so easily, this world is suffering so much in its attempt to please you, the Lord of all, by pursuing so many paths and practicing so many different doctrines and elaborate rituals known as “Sadhans” (*jānē binu rāma-rīti paci paci jaga marata*).

[To wit, when spiritual liberation and deliverance, as well as joy, peace and bliss are so easily and readily available by simply having love and devotion for you and your holy feet, what sense does it make in suffering so much by pursuing so many other religious paths, and practicing so many tedious methods and observing so many countless stern vows to obtain the same fruit?]

Is it not wise to understand that you become easily pleased with your devotees who surrender before you and seek shelter with you, and that you show mercy, grace, kindness and benevolence on those who are distressed, tormented, humble and wretched?

Forsooth and without gainsay, a person who realises this fact is a lucky person. He realises that by simply surrendering at your (i.e. Lord Ram’s) holy feet and seeking shelter there, he can be rest assured and be certain of his liberation and deliverance, of his salvation and emancipation.

Indeed such a wise and realised person is easily able to cross-over from this ocean of transmigration and free himself from the horrors of this mundane existence just like other humble creatures as Tulsidas who had also done so and had crossed this ocean by seeking shelter and refuge at your holy feet without any deceit, crookedness, trickery, deception, pretensions and insincerity in their hearts (*parihari chala sarana gayē tulasihu-sē tarata*)⁶.

[⁶The crucial point to note here is that a person should approach the Lord with a clean and pure heart. The Lord does not like tickery and pretensions. Lord Ram has himself asserted this point when he said that he does not like these negative traits in a person who comes to seek shelter with him. He made this observations at the time when Vibhishan had come to seek his protection. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 44.

Free from the complex web of words, this stanza simply means that Lord Sri Ram is pleased with simple-hearted devotion, love and total surrender by his

devotees. He is very much moved at their pitiful condition of his devotees, and does not require elaborate rituals for appeasement.] (7).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Words of Wisdom for the Welfare of the Creature

Rāga Sūhō Bilāvala

(135 / 1)

राम सनेही सों तैं न सनेह कियो ।
 अगम जो अमरनि हूँ सो तनु तोहिं दियो ॥
 दियो सुकुल जनम, सरीर सुंदर, हेतु जो फल चारिको ।
 जो पाइ पंडित परमपद, पावत पुरारि—मुरारिको ॥
 यह भरतखंड, समीप सुरसरि, थल भलो, संगति भली ।
 तेरी कुमति कायर! कलप—बल्ली चाहति है बिष फल फली ॥135 / 1 ॥

(135/1)

rāma sanēhī sōm taim na sanēha kiyō.
 agama jō amarani hūm̐ sō tanu tōhim̐ diyō.
 diyō sukula janama, sarīra sundara, hētu jō phala cārikō.
 jō pā'i paṇḍita paramapada, pāvata purāri-murārikō.
 yaha bharatakhaṇḍa, samīpa surasari, thala bhalō, saṅgati bhalī.
 tērī kumati kāyara! kalapa-ballī cahati hai biṣa phala phalī. 135/1.

Verse no. 135/1—[This verse is divided into five sub-verses, nos. 135/1—to 135/5. Addressing himself as a guise for addressing all other living beings in general, Tulsidas admonishes himself for not feeling sufficiently obliged and thankful to Lord Ram, and not having a high degree of devotion and affection for the Lord who had been so kind and extremely gracious towards him. He means that no matter how devoted and dedicated we may be towards the Lord, no matter how much we say we serve the Lord, we still would never be able to repay even a fraction of our moral debts to the merciful and gracious Lord who has done so much for us. No amount of thanks-giving and expression of gratitude would ever compensate for the Lord's largesse, his generosity, and the benevolence that he has shown towards all of us.]

‘Oh you creature! You did not develop affection towards Lord Sri Ram who had been kind, affectionate and graceful to you (rāma sanēhī sōm taim na sanēha kiyō) because he has given you a human body which is rare and most difficult even for the Gods to obtain (agama jō amarani hūm̐ sō tanu tōhim̐ diyō)¹.

He gave you a birth as a human being, which is the highest form in the hierarchy of evolution, and in a good and respected family (such as that of a Brahmin or any other noble family—“*diyō sukula janama*”), and he gifted you with a beautiful form (or a body which is handsome, able, disease-free and without any deformities—“*sarīra sundara*”). This body of yours is an instrument by which you can achieve all sorts of prosperity and fame in this world: it helps you to get the four symbolic rewards of all successful endeavours in one’s life that are known as the four fruits of ‘Artha’ (material prosperity and well-being), ‘Dharma’ (rewards of being righteous and good in life), ‘Kaam’ (fulfillment of desires), and ‘Moksha’ (attainment of emancipation and salvation) (*hētu jō phala cārikō*).

This body helps those who are self-realised, wise and enlightened to attain a high and exalted spiritual stature of transcendental existence (*jō pā’i paṇḍita paramapada*) that is equivalent to being one with Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna (*pāvata purāri-murārikō*). [This shows that Tulsidas makes no distinction between his beloved Lord Ram, and Lords Shiva and Krishna.]

Besides this above good fortune, one is blessed for being born in a land known as Bharat that itself is regarded as a holy land (*yaha bharatakhaṇḍa*), and at a place where the holy river Ganges is nearby (*samīpa surasari*)—what a pleasant combination of good circumstances it is!

To cap it all there is the added advantage of having the company of saints and the opportunity of communion with sages and seers where spiritual guidance and divine discourses are given and good things discussed in a routine manner (*thala bhalō, saṅgati bhalī*).

In spite of all this good luck that you have, despite the best of opportunities available to you, oh you wicked and stupid fellow, oh you dull-headed rascal (*tērī kumati kāyara*), this body of yours, which ought to be like a wish-fulfilling creeper called Kalpa-Lata for you as it can help you to attain the highest levels of success in life and obtain peace and bliss for yourself, only gives you poisonous fruits symbolised by grief, pain, suffering and miseries (*kalapa-ballī cahati hai biṣa phala phalī*).

You know why? It is due to your mind and intellect that are ill-advised, corrupted and perverse (*tērī kumati*). [To wit, you are misusing the golden opportunities that you are fortunate enough to have, and wasting your precious time and life and effort by flirting with the world and its sensual pleasures at the cost of your long-term spiritual good, your true happiness, your well-being and the peace of your inner-self.] (135/1).

[Note—¹The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly has been repeatedly stressed in Vinai Patrika at a number of places. Some of the instances are verse nos. 83-84, 102, 130, 151, 194, 198-202 etc.]

(135 / 2)

अजहूँ समुझि चित दै सुनु परमारथ ।
है हितु सो जगहूँ जाहिते स्वारथ ॥
स्वारथहि प्रिय, स्वारथ सो का ते कौन बेद बखानई ।
देखु खल, अहि—खेल परिहरि, सो प्रभुहि पहिचानई ॥

पितु—मातु, गुरु, स्वामी, अपनपौ, तिय, तनय, सेवक, सखा ।
प्रिय लगत जागे प्रेमसों, बिनु हेतु हित तैं नहिं लखा ।।135/2।।

(135/2)

ajahūṁ samujhi cita dai sunu paramāratha.
hai hitu sō jagahūṁ jāhitē svāratha.
svārathahi priya, svāratha sō kā tē kauna bēda bakhāna'ī.
dēkhu khala, ahi-khēla parihari, sō prabhuhi pahicāna'ī.
pitu-mātu, guru, svāmī, apanapau, tiya, tanaya, sēvaka, sakhā.
priya lagata jāgē prēmasōṁ, binu hētu hita tairṁ nahirṁ lakhā. 135/2.

Verse no. 135/2—Understand it even now (for it is never too late to wake up and mend one's ways—"ajahūṁ samujhi"). Pay attention to spiritual talk and good advice that is for your own good and well-being (cita dai sunu paramāratha). This advice would not only provide you with your spiritual welfare and happiness but also take care of your self-interests in this world as long as you live, for it gives all-round auspiciousness, happiness, peace and joy. Therefore, you'll be well-advised to heed them and pay close attention to them (hai hitu sō jagahūṁ jāhitē svāratha).

Say, who is not interested in his own welfare and good? Though everyone proudly claims to be selfless to impress others, but hidden in some corner of their heart and mind every single individual has some concern about his own interests; no one would want his self-interest to suffer beyond a certain acceptable limits. Is it not true? (svārathahi priya).

Well then, suppose you are not pretentious and accept that you are interested in your basic self-interest, then think, 'who is the one who serves your self-interests the most' (svāratha sō kā tē kauna)? [Obviously, it is Lord Ram, and no one else. This being the case, is it not wise and prudent and in your own interest to serve the Lord and do what best you can do for him; is it not wise to prefer and favour the Lord over all other things in your life and this world—for no one else would help in serving your own self interest as much as the Lord would.]

Remember this: Even the Vedas assert this fact (that there is no one more friendly and helpful in life than the Lord; there is no one more dearer and close to a creature's soul than the Lord himself as he is the loving Supreme Father of all living beings) (bēda bakhāna'ī).

Oh you wicked and stupid one (khala)! See (dēkhu), stop playing with a snake representing pleasures and temptations of the sense objects of the material, gross and mundane world (ahi-khēla parihari). [These sensual pleasures and worldly temptations would entangle you and hold you in their vice-like grip that would leave you writhing in endless sufferings, grief, pain and miseries from which you'll find hard to extricate yourself if you allow this metaphoric snake to bite you even once.]

You must realise and see for yourself, for your own good that Lord Ram is the one who binds all the creatures together in a bond of kinship because their 'true self' is the same entity (sō prabhuhi pahicāna'ī). This results in the establishment of a chain of relationships of various shades between different bodies (or creatures)—such as that of a father, a teacher, a lord and master, a son, a servant or attendant, a friend, and so

on and so forth (pitu-mātu, guru, svāmī, apanapau, tiya, tanaya, sēvaka, sakhā).

[The reason is that the true form of Lord Ram is ‘pure cosmic Consciousness’ which is known as the ‘Parmatma’ or the Supreme Atma at the universal level of existence. This cosmic and universal Supreme Atma that has an existence which encompasses the entire spectrum of the living creation has manifested itself in the form of an individual with a body, with the individual’s Atma being a fraction or a reflection of the cosmic Atma. In other words, the individual Atma or soul that lives in the body of each living being is the same as the cosmic Atma that lives everywhere; the difference is only in the level of its existence. This is the common factor or denominator in all living beings—it is the bridge that links all the bodies together.]

Think for yourself: why have you forgotten and neglected such a friendly and dear Lord (Ram) who does good for all without asking for any favour or expectation of any praise and service in return (priya lagata jāgē prēmasōm, binu hētu hita tairṁ nahim lakhā) (135/2).

(135/3)

दूरि न सो हितू हेरि हिये ही है।
 छलहि छाँड़ि सुमिरे छोहु किये ही है॥
 किये छोहु छाया कमल करकी भगतपर भजतहि भजै।
 जगदीस, जीवन जीवको, जो साज सब सबको सजै॥
 हरिहि हरिता, बिधिहि बिधिता, सिवहि सिवता जो दर्ई।
 सोइ जानकी—पति मधुर मूरति, मोदमय मंगलमई॥135/3॥

(135/3)

dūri na sō hitū hēri hiyē hī hai.
 chalahi chāmṛi sumirē chōhu kiyē hī hai.
 kiyē chōhu chāyā kamala karakī bhagatapara bhajatahi bhajai.
 jagadīsa, jīvana jīvakō, jō sāja saba sabakō sajai.
 harihi haritā, bidhihi bidhitā, sivahi sivatā jō daī.
 sō'i jānakī-pati madhura mūrati, mōdamaya maṅgalamaī. 135/3.

Verse no. 135/3—Remember this: This beloved Lord of yours, who is your benefactor and well-wisher, is not far away anywhere, and you don’t have to seek him elsewhere for he is present in your own heart (dūri na sō hitū hēri hiyē hī hai).

By remembering the Lord honestly with a pure heart, and without having any sort of deceit and pretensions, it is sure that he always shows his kindness, grace and benevolence upon the devotee (chalahi chāmṛi sumirē chōhu kiyē hī hai). [To wit, the Lord always resides in the heart of all, but it is due to the veil or screen of deceit, delusions, pretensions and dishonesty that he is not experienced or witnessed by all. To experience the presence of Lord Ram within one’s own self, it is imperative to be free from all pretensions, corruptions, falsehood and conceit. Remember of all things that it is impossible to cheat the Lord act smart with him!]

As soon as you remove this veil and overcome your ignorance, you can see the lotus-like face of the Lord within your own self (you can come face to face with him in the form of your own Atma or pure consciousness) (sumirē chōhu kiyē hī hai). [And this would make you thrilled and ecstatic as it is tantamount to attaining bliss of the best kind.]

He (the Lord) constantly casts the protective shadow of his outstretched palms (as an umbrella) to protect and look after the welfare and well-being of his devotees himself (kiyē chōhu chāyā kamala karakī). Nay, not only this, the Lord goes a step further: for he worships all those who worship him (bhagatapara bhajatahi bhajai)! [To wit, the Lord always remembers and takes special care of all those who remember him, those revere and adore him. If the devotee takes the trouble of taking a step towards the Lord, the Lord is willing and ready to walk down the mile to meet such a devotee even before he may have actually taken the second step on the path towards the Lord, so to say.]

He is the Lord of the universe and of this creation (jagadīsa). He is the very life (soul, essence) of a creature (because the Lord is represented by the pure consciousness that is the basic ingredient and characteristic feature of life in this creation) (jīvana jīvakō).

He is the one who creates all types of materialistic comforts to satisfy the needs of all living beings according to their individual requirements and in consonance to their needs (jō sāja saba sabakō sajai).

He is the Supreme Authority and the Lord of the Universe who gives the powers of creation and supremacy to Brahma (bidhihi bidhitā), of sustenance of the creation and removal of its torments to Vishnu (harihi haritā), and of bringing an end to this creation itself to Shiva (sivahi sivatā jō daī).

In all sooth and without gainsay, that Supreme Being has manifested himself in the form of Lord Ram, the Lord of Sita (his wife) (sō'i jānakī-pati), a form which is exceedingly sweet, blissful and charming (madhura mūrati), and a provider of auspiciousness to the beholder (mōdamaya maṅgalamaī) (135/3).

[Note :- Here, Lord Sri Ram is invoked in his primary cosmic form as the Supreme Lord of this creation, the Lord God who is known as Brahm and Parmatma in the scriptures. In this cosmic and universal form, the Lord is all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient; he is 'pure cosmic Consciousness' that is the fundamental basis of life.]

(135/4)

ठाकुर अतिहि बड़ो, सील, सरल, सुठि ।
 ध्यान अगम सिवहूँ, भेंट्यो केवट उठि ॥
 भरि अंक भेंट्यो सजल नयन, सनेह सिथिल सरीर सो ।
 सुर, सिद्ध, मुनि, कबि कहत कोउ न प्रेमप्रिय रघुबीर सो ॥
 खग, सबरि, निसिचर, भालु, कपि किये आपु ते बंदित बड़े ।
 तापर तिन्ह कि सेवा सुमिरि जिय जात जनु सकुचनि गड़े ॥135/4॥

(135/4)

ṭhākura atihi barō, sīla, sarala, suṭhi.
 dhyāna agama sivahūṃ, bhēṇṭyō kēvaṭa uṭhi.
 bhari aṅka bhēṇṭyō sajala nayana, sanēha sithila sarīra sō.
 sura, sid'dha, muni, kabi kahata kō'u na prēmapriya raghubīra sō.
 khaga, sabari, nisicara, bhālu, kapi kiyē āpu tē bandita barē.
 tāpara tinha ki sēvā sumiri jiya jāta janu sakucani garē. 135/4.

Verse no. 135/4—(Although) The Lord is a very exalted and supreme, the high and mighty Great Lord of the entire world and the entire creation (ṭhākura atihi barō), (yet) he is very courteous, pleasant, sweet and simple hearted by nature (sīla, sarala, suṭhi). [To wit, Lord Ram has no trace of pride and an air of majesty about him. He is very approachable and amiable by nature. He makes it sure that those who come to him do not feel uncomfortable at all, or are awed by him. The Lord wants everyone to feel welcomed and at home.]

He, on whom even Shiva finds difficulty to concentrate his mind during meditation (dhyāna agama sivahūṃ), had picked up and affectionately embraced the humble and lowly Kevat (the boatman) (bhēṇṭyō kēvaṭa uṭhi). As soon as he embraced the latter, tears welled-up in his eyes and the body became almost thrilled with affection (bhari aṅka bhēṇṭyō sajala nayana, sanēha sithila sarīra sō). [This refers to Lord Ram embracing the boatman after he had taken the Lord and his wife Sita and brother Laxman across the river Ganges when Lord Ram was on his way to the forest from his capital city of Ayodhya. At that time, Lord Ram had not hesitated in showing his affection for the boatman inspite of the fact that the Lord was the king of the realm and the boatman was of a low caste and one of the humblest subjects of the kingdom. This incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102.]

The gods, the exalted mystics, the great hermits and the sages as well as those who are learned and experts in this field (sura, sid'dha, muni, kabi)—all of them assert that there is no one as affectionate and dear to a living being as is Lord Sri Ram, there is no one who has so much love and affection for all as Lord Ram has, no one is more enchanted, captivated or endeared by love and affection shown to him as is Lord Sri Ram (kahata kō'u na prēmapriya raghubīra sō). [To wit, it is very easy to please Lord Ram because the Lord feels highly obliged towards anyone who shows even a trace of love and affection for him. Indeed, the Lord goes out of his way to please and help such a person who shows some degree of devotion for the Lord. In this world, indeed and without gainsay, there is no one who knows how to reciprocate the emotions of love and affection more than Lord Ram.]

For instance, the Lord had transformed the bird (the vulture Jatau), Sabari (the old tribal woman), the demon (Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king of Lanka, Ravana), the bears (e.g. Jamvant), the monkeys (e.g. Sugriv) and others into being more praise worthy, honourable and noble in this world than even himself (khaga, sabari, nisicara, bhālu, kapi kiyē āpu tē bandita barē). [Refer: Verse no. 134 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

Inspite of this (tāpara) magnanimous, benevolent and gracious gesture shown to them by the Lord, when he remembered the services rendered by them to him (tinha

ki sēvā sumiri jiya, he felt shy and humble that he could not do much more for them in return (jāta janu sakucani gaṛē) (135/4).

(135 / 5)

स्वामीको सुभाव कह्यो सो जब उर आनिहै ।
 सोच सकल मिटिहैं, राम भलो मन मानिहैं ।।
 भलो मानिहैं रघुनाथ जोरि जो हाथ माथो नाइहै ।
 ततकाल तुलसीदास जीवन—जनमको फल पाइहै ।।
 जपि नाम करहि प्रनाम, कहि गुन—ग्राम, रामहिं धरि हिये ।
 बिचरहि अवनि अवनिस—चरनसरोज मन—मधुकर किये ।। 135 / 5 ।।

(135/5)

svāmikō subhāva kahyō sō jaba ura ānihai.
 sōca sakala miṭihaiṁ, rāma bhalō mana mānihaiṁ.
 bhalō mānihaiṁ raghunātha jōri jō hātha māthō nā'ihai.
 tatakāla tulasīdāsa jīvana-janamakō phala pā'ihai.
 japi nāma karahi pranāma, kahi guna-grāma, rāmahiṁ dhari hiyē.
 bicarahi avani avanīsa-caranasarōja mana-madhukara kiyē. 135/5.

Verse no. 135/5—When you become convinced in your heart of the (courteous, gracious, benevolent, magnanimous, noble and loving) character and temperament of Lord Sri Ram that I have narrated above, and establish this fact in your heart (svāmikō subhāva kahyō sō jaba ura ānihai), be assured that then not only all your worries and miseries will be erased and eliminated once and for all (sōca sakala miṭihaiṁ), but that Lord Sri Ram will also feel very happy (rāma bhalō mana mānihaiṁ) (that you have at last realised your mistakes and understood the truth about the Lord, that at last you have accepted that the Lord had been exceptionally kind and merciful to you, that at last you have developed devotion and love for the Lord, for the Lord expects nothing more from you than this realisation).

Ah! The fact is that Lord Sri Ram would become pleased with you at the instant when you fold your hands and join your palms in salutation and submission before the Lord, and bow your head before him (with reverence, humility and surrender) (bhalō mānihaiṁ raghunātha jōri jō hātha māthō nā'ihai). [To wit, the Lord does not need formalities and elaborate rituals to be pleased. As simple a gesture as bowing one's head and joining of one's palms to show respect is sufficient to please the Lord who would immediately get up and embrace the devotee cheerfully.]

Oh Tulsidas! You would get the fruits of taking birth (as a human being) at that instant when you do so (i.e. when you bow your head before Lord Ram and fold your hands to show your respect to him—because then Lord Ram would manifest himself before you in your heart) (tatakāla tulasīdāsa jīvana-janamakō phala pā'ihai).

So therefore, you will be well advised to chant and repeat Lord Ram's holy name (japi nāma), bow before him to pay your obeisance to the Lord (karahi

pranāma), sing and spread the endless legends of the Lord's bountiful glory and immensity of fame (kahi guna-grāma), enthrone him in the shrine of your heart (rāmahiṁ dhari hiyē), and making your mind into a bee, let it reside in the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (caranasarōja mana-madhukara kiyē)—and then, oh Tulsidas, you would be able to roam about fearlessly in this world for all times to come (bicarahi avani avanīsa). [None of the things that torment you at present would dare disturb your peace of mind after that.] (135/5).

The horrors associated with taking birth in this world

(136 / 1)

जिव जबतें हरितें बिलगान्यो । तबतें देह गेह निज जान्यो ॥
 मायाबस स्वरूप बिसरायो । तेहि भ्रमतें दारुन दुख पायो ॥
 पायो जो दारुन दुसह दुख, सुख—लेस सपनेहुँ नहिँ मिल्यो ।
 भव—सूल, सोक अनेक जेहि, तेहि पंथ तू हठि हठि चल्यो ॥
 बहु जोनि जनम, जरा, बिपति मतिमंद ! हरि जान्यो नहीं ।
 श्रीराम बिनु बिश्राम मूढ़ ! बिचारु, लखि पायो कहीं ॥ 136 / 1 ॥

(136/1)

jiva jabatēm haritēm bilagān'yō. tabatēm dēha gēha nija jān'yō.
 māyābasa svarūpa bisarāyō. tēhi bhramatēm dārūna dukha pāyō.
 pāyō jō dārūna dusaha dukha, sukha-lēsa sapanēhum' nahīm milyō.
 bhava-sūla, sōka anēka jēhi, tēhi pantha tū haṭhi haṭhi calyō.
 bahu jōni janama, jarā, bipati matimanda! hari jān'yō nahīm.
 śrīrāma binu biśrāma mūrha! bicāru, lakhi pāyō kahīm. 136/1.

Verse no. 136/1—Oh Jiva (the creature; the living being)! Ever since (tabatēm) you got detached from (or treated yourself as separate from, or had deserted) the Lord God (jiva jabatēm haritēm bilagān'yō), you have mistakenly regarded this gross and perishable body of yours as your home (dēha gēha nija jān'yō)¹.

[¹Here, the word 'Jiva', which literally means 'one who is alive or one who is conscious', refers to the 'soul', also called the 'Atma', of the living being as it is the only entity that gives the creature his 'life'. If this 'consciousness' is removed from the body of the creature, the latter would be dead. Now, this individual's consciousness is the same as cosmic Consciousness that pervades throughout this living creation. Since both these two instances of 'consciousness', i.e. at the individual's level and the cosmic level, are the same entity, to distinguish one from the other is as foolish as trying to distinguish the sample of ocean water taken in a cup from the main body of the water in the ocean itself.

Therefore, if an ignorant creature thinks that his individual body is his 'true identity' instead of understanding that it is not so as it is the 'consciousness' that resides within this body which is his true self and truthful identity, and that his individual consciousness is the same as the universal Consciousness that is present everywhere in this living creation and in all other creatures like him, then surely he is

sorely mistaken. This great metaphysical principle is being cited here by Tulsidas when he says that the creature has got separated from the Lord because he has started treating his gross body as his 'self' instead of understanding that it is actually the 'consciousness' that is his 'true self' and not the gross body. The 'Lord' here refers to the cosmic Consciousness that is invisible, infinite and all-pervading, while the 'Jiva' refers to the same Consciousness that resides inside the body of a living being, a body that is visible, has a finite dimension and its own set of limitations.]

Look, under the influence (or spell) of delusions, you have forgotten your true nature and form which is called 'consciousness' (māyābasa svarūpa bisarāyō). [Remember that this form of yours is eternal and blissful.]

It is only due to your mistaken beliefs and your ignorance of the fact (as stated above) that you had to undergo extreme amount of grief, sorrows and tribulations of various kinds (tēhi bhramatēm dāruna dukha pāyō). You have subjected yourself to intolerable agonies and miseries in the form of sufferings incurred at the time of, and due to, your birth and death (pāyō jō dāruna dusaha dukha). [For in all sooth, the cause of all your miseries is that you have started treating your gross body as your 'self' instead of the 'Atma' which is pure consciousness. It is the 'gross body' that dies and takes a birth and is subjected to their attendant horrors and pains, but the 'consciousness' is free from these things as it is eternal and blissful.]

Happiness, joy, peace and comfort always eluded you; they were not available to you even in small traces (slightest or minimal amount) in your dreams (sukha-lēsa sapanēhum nahirṁ milyō).

You had stubbornly and repeatedly (out of your own stupidity and ignorance) followed the path which is full of countless worldly troubles, tribulations and sorrows (bhava-sūla, sōka anēka jēhi, tēhi pantha tū haṭhi haṭhi calyō). You had wandered in numerous wombs (births), became old, had suffered and died (bahu jōni janama, jarā, bipati).

But oh you stupid fellow (matimanda), inspite of all this, you had not attempted to recognise Lord Sri Hari (hari jān'yō nahirṁ).

Oh you fool (mūrha)! Think over it, see everywhere around you (bicāru, lakhi)—has anyone got peace anywhere by forsaking Lord Sri Ram (śrīrāma binu biśrāma pāyō kahīṁ)? (136/1).

(136/2)

आनंद—सिंधु—मध्य तव बासा । बिनु जाने कस मरसि पियासा ॥
मृग—भ्रम—बारि सत्य जिय जानी । तहँ तू मगन भयो सुख मानी ॥
तहँ मगन मज्जसि, पान करि, त्रयकाल जल नाही जहाँ ।
निज सहज अनुभव रूप तव खल ! भूलि अब आयो तहाँ ॥
निरमल, निरंजन, निरबिकार, उदार सुख तैं परिहस्यो ।
निःकाज राज बिहाय नृप इव सपन कारागृह पस्यो ॥ 136/2 ॥

(136/2)

ānam̐da-sindhu-madhya tava bāsā. binu jānē kasa marasi piyāsā.
 mrga-bhrama-bāri satya jiya jānī. taham̐ tū magana bhayō sukha mānī.
 taham̐ magana majjasi, pāna kari, trayakāla jala nāhīm jahām̐.
 nija sahaja anubhava rūpa tava khala! bhūli aba āyō tahām̐.
 niramala, niranjana, nirabikāra, udāra sukha taim pariharyō.
 niḥkāja rāja bihāya nrpa iva sapana kāragrha paryō. 136/2.

Verse no. 136/2—Oh you Jiva! Your natural habitat, your natural home is in the ‘ocean of bliss’ (i.e. you are surrounded by an ocean of bliss which is the inherent virtue of your true self, your Atma) (ānam̐da-sindhu-madhya tava bāsā). Still, say, why do you forget it and die of thirst (binu jānē kasa marasi piyāsā)? [To wit, is it not utterly foolish and incredulous for a person who is surrounded by an ocean of nectar to die of thirst for something to drink? You are so stupid that your condition is no better—for though your true nature in the form of your Atma or soul is blissful and full of contentedness, you roam around in this world full of wants and rolling in miseries of varied kinds.]

You consider the illusionary water of the mirage symbolised by this delusory world and its tempting but illusive objects as being real (mrga-bhrama-bāri satya jiya jānī), and you are therefore engrossed in them, you delighted and enchanted by them and their fake happiness (taham̐ tū magana bhayō sukha mānī); you find satisfaction by bathing in and drinking this water (taham̐ magana majjasi, pāna kari)! Is it not absolutely ridiculous for you to do so? [To wit, you spend your lifetime engrossed in pursuing the gross perishable world and its equally gross and transient charms that always evade you the more you run after them trying to seek comfort and happiness in something that does not have these virtues at all. They are like a bait thrown by the fisherman to catch the greedy fish, and like this stupid creature who does not realise what is in store for it, you too fall for the temptations and get trapped in a vicious cycle of grief and miseries.]

But the truth is that the water of real happiness, peace and joy is never available in that ‘mirage’ at any point of time, in the past, the present or the future (trayakāla jala nāhīm jahām̐). [Here, the gross world and its material objects along with the charms and temptations that they present are regarded as the ‘water in the desert mirage’. A thirst may would die running after this false water of the desert mirage if he is foolish enough to do so.]

Oh you dull-witted, wicked and crooked fellow (tava khala)! Having forgotten about your true identity and sublime form (nija sahaja anubhava rūpa tava bhūli) which is so immaculate, faultless, imperishable and divine, i.e. about your own Atma which is pure consciousness and your true self (niramala, niranjana, nirabikāra), which results in your not being able to experience the natural sense of happiness and bliss that is a part of your nature and your own self (udāra sukha taim pariharyō), you have come to this place where you expect to find happiness and peace that are like a mirage seen in a desert, and so therefore how can you ever expect to find what you want (aba āyō tahām̐)?

Indeed, your condition is like that of a foolish king who voluntarily allows himself to be imprisoned, and then complains and wails about his misfortunes, about his miseries and grief, which, as is obvious, are of his own making, and he himself is to be blamed for his discomfort (niḥkāja rāja bihāya nrpa iva sapana kāragrha

paryō). [To wit, like this stupid king you too have voluntarily allowed yourself to land in such a tragic situation where you find yourself miserable and surrounded by pain and grief. And no one can help you out of this predicament but your own self—and this can only happen if you wake up to the realities which you have been ignoring so far. Remember: you can eliminate all the causes of your sufferings once you realise your true self as being ‘pure consciousness’ which is absolutely different from the gross body that you have hitherto regarded as your identity.] (136/2).

(136/3)

तैं निज करम—डोरि दृढ़ कीन्हीं। अपने करनि गाँठि गहि दीन्हीं॥
 तातैं परबस पश्यो अभागे। ता फल गरभ—बास—दुख आगे॥
 आगे अनेक समूह संसृति उदरगत जान्यो सोऊ।
 सिर हेठ, ऊपर चरन, संकट बात नहिं पूछै कोऊ॥
 सोनित—पुरीष जो मूत्र—मल कृमि—कर्ममावृत सोवई।
 कोमल सरीर, गँभीर बेदन, सीस धुनि—धुनि रोवई॥136/3॥

(136/3)

taiṁ nija karama-ḍōri dṛṛha kīnhīm. apanē karani gāmṭhi gahi dīnhīm.
 tātēm parabasa paryō abhāgē. tā phala garabha-bāsa-dukha āgē.
 āgē anēka samūha sansṛti udaragata jān'yō sō'ū.
 sira hēṭha, ūpara carana, saṅkaṭa bāta nahīm pūchai kō'ū.
 sōnita-purīṣa jō mūtra-mala kṛmi-kardamāvṛta sōva'ī.
 kōmala sarīra, gaṁbhīra bēdana, sīsa dhuni-dhuni rōva'ī. 136/3.

Verse no. 136/3—You have yourself (out of your ignorance) strengthened the rope, symbolised by your deeds (taiṁ nija karama-ḍōri dṛṛha kīnhīm), and have used your own hands to make strong knots in it with which you have voluntarily tied yourself down to this world (apanē karani gāmṭhi gahi dīnhīm). [Here, the ‘rope’ stands for a long chain of deeds that a creature voluntarily does in this world, and the ‘knot’ stands for his getting mentally and emotionally involved in these deeds and their consequences. The more he allows himself to be involved in the deeds and hooked to them at the mental and emotional level, the stronger is the knot and the harder it is to break free from it. This situation is in contrast with doing deeds selflessly and with the awareness that it is the duty of the body to do its assigned deeds with the Atma remaining only as a mere neutral spectator. If the deed is done with a sense of detachment from it and its result, whether good or bad, then it would be like having the rope but not allowing oneself to be tied by it in a knot.]

This is why, oh you unfortunate one, you have lost your independence and have become dependant (tātēm parabasa paryō abhāgē). [You have lost the sense of eternal freedom and happiness that is so characteristic of the Atma. Instead of this eclectic state of existence, you are mired in miseries just because you allow yourself to get involved in deeds, and you cannot run away from their consequences.]

Since you have to bear with what you sow, you are compelled to take another birth, and thus set in motion a chain of births and deaths and their attendant problems (tā

phala garabha-bāsa-dukha āgē). [Had you realised who you truly are, had you done deeds without attachment to them, you would not only have had peace in your current life but you would also have obtained liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. This is because each deed done by you would produce some result, either good or bad, and since you consider yourself as the ‘doer’ of these deeds it is you who must own up these deeds and bear with their consequences. You just cannot turn away from this cycle if it does not suit you.]

The countless bundles of miseries and torments associated with taking birth in this gross mundane world and living through its horrors is known and experienced only by him who has entered into and lived inside a mother's womb (āgē anēka samūha sansṛti udaragata jān'yō sō'ū)—where the head is pointing downwards and the legs are turned upwards (“sira hēṭha, ūpara carana”—in a dangling posture—which is like hanging someone upside down as a severe punishment). During this trying time of severe sufferance in the mother's womb, there is no one to give comfort and offer any sort of help (saṅkaṭa bāta nahiṁ pūchai kō'ū). During this time a creature lies asleep in a mother's womb, surrounded with filth consisting of blood, stool, urine, mucous, germs, slush and stink of the mother's womb (sōnita-purīṣa jō mūtra-mala kṛmi-kardamāvrta sōvaṭ).

Verily indeed, this is not an ideal place to live and rest! The creature's skin and his body in general (i.e. the embryonic body) are very soft, fragile, sensitive and delicate at this point of time in his life (kōmala sarīra), and so his sufferings in the mother's womb are all the more unbearable and horrifying even to imagine (gambhīra bēdana). At that time he literally beats his head, weeps and laments at his misfortune and ill-fate (sīsa dhuni-dhuni rōvaṭ): he regrets and wonders as to why did he allow himself to come to this pitiable state of affairs; why did he not pay heed to the wise advice given to him in his previous life when he was warned to take care of his future and not get involved in the deeds and the gross world; why did he not surrender before the Lord God, seeking the Lord's mercy and blessings that would grant him liberation from all future horrors like this one?

[But now of course it is too late, at least for the time being. However, the creature, thus suffering, does make a vow not to repeat the mistake again. But he is so utterly stupid that once he comes out from the hellish and harsh environment of the mother's womb and sees the colourful world of so many charms outside, he forgets all his miseries of some time ago, and as time passes he voluntarily plunges into the wonderful world head-on, and commits the same sort of mistakes that he had committed in his previous life. So by and by, he enters another womb and hangs upside down once again like a bat!!] (136/3).

(136 / 4)

तू निज करम—जाल जहँ घेरो । श्रीहरि संग तज्यो नहिं तेरो ॥
 बहुबिधि प्रतिपालन प्रभु कीन्हों । परम कृपालु ग्यान तोहि दीन्हों ॥
 तोहि दियो ग्यान—बिबेक, जनम अनेककी तब सुधि भई ।
 तेहि ईसकी हों सरन, जाकी बिषम माया गुनमई ॥
 जेहि किये जीव—निकाय बस, रसहीन, दिन—दिन अति नई ।
 सो करौ बेगि सँभार श्रीपति, बिपति महँ जेहि मति दर्ई ॥ 136 / 4 ॥

(136/4)

tū nija karama-jāla jaham̃ ghērō. śrīhari saṅga tajyō nahim̃ tērō.
 bahubidhi pratipālana prabhu kīnhōm̃. parama kṛpālu gyāna tōhi dīnhōm̃.
 tōhi diyō gyāna-bibēka, janama anēkakī taba sudhi bha'ī.
 tēhi īsakī hauṁ sarana, jākī biṣama māyā gunama'ī.
 jēhi kiyē jīva-nikāya basa, rasahīna, dina-dina ati na'ī.
 sō karau bēgi sambhāra śrīpati, bipati maham̃ jēhi mati da'ī. 136/4.

Verse no. 136/4—At a place and in the precarious condition (i.e. in the hellish environment of your mother's womb) where you had landed yourself because of the result of your deeds (in the previous life that compelled you to take a birth once again), and where you had been suffering horribly (tū nija karama-jāla jaham̃ ghērō), the Lord God, Lord Hari, had not abandoned you even there; the Lord had not deserted and forsaken you even for a moment there (śrīhari saṅga tajyō nahim̃ tērō).

The Lord had sustained and protected you in the womb also, and he had taken care of you (that inspite of the harsh surroundings that you were forced to live in, you were not suffocated to death and came out healthy and heartily into this world) (bahubidhi pratipālana prabhu kīnhōm̃).

That most merciful and benevolent Lord Hari (the Supreme Being) had even preached or advised you while you were still in the womb (parama kṛpālu gyāna tōhi dīnhōm̃). [To wit, the Lord had subtly empowered you to understand how much you were suffering at that time. The Lord had injected 'life and consciousness' in your otherwise lifeless body which was nothing but a lump of flesh and bones at that time. He had made you aware about the true essence of things, about your true nature and the falsehood of this world, and had advised you to mend your ways so that you do not have to come to the womb again in future. This advice of the Lord came in the form of your own subtle thoughts and the silent awareness of the sufferings you were undergoing while you lay helplessly in the womb.]

When Lord Hari thus gave you this advice, when he blessed you with this awareness, this enlightenment and wisdom (while you were in the mother's womb) (tōhi diyō gyāna-bibēka), you had recollected the events of your many previous births, and you had repented at that time (janama anēkakī taba sudhi bha'ī).

You had prayed to the Lord, saying—'I am taking refuge with and seeking shelter in the holy feet of that Lord God (tēhi īsakī hauṁ sarana) whose powerful power of creating the mysteries of Maya (i.e. the most difficult and intractable delusions) (jākī biṣama māyā gunama'ī) that has the unique ability to capture all living beings in its powerful hold (jēhi kiyē jīva-nikāya basa), making life miserable and devoid of all happiness for everyone (rasahīna), and which changes its contours and colours every other day and moment (dina-dina ati na'ī), had also trapped me and brought me to this condition.

[Since this Maya is the Lord's creation, it follows that it can be removed by the Lord himself; it is the Lord who can free me from its tangle. This Maya is extremely powerful and potent, and therefore the Lord who controls it is obviously superior to it and most powerful and able in this creation. And therefore it is only He who can

salvage me from this horror in which I find myself in. Realising this, I prayed to the Lord:] ‘It is this Lord of Laxmi (“śrīpati”—a reference to Lord Vishnu who is also known as ‘Hari’ and who had manifested himself in the form of Lord Ram) who has been kind enough to give me this wisdom while I am suffering in the womb because of my own failings in the previous life (*bipati maham̐ jēhi mati da’i*), and so I pray to him to bless me and provide me with urgent liberation and deliverance from my present miserable state of sufferings and agonies (*sō karau bēgi sam̐bhāra*).’ (136/4).

(136/5)

पुनि बहुबिधि गलानि जिय मानी । अब जग जाइ भजौं चक्रपानी ॥
 ऐसेहि करि बिचार चुप साधी । प्रसव-पवन प्रेरेउ अपराधी ॥
 प्रेरेयो जो परम प्रचंड मारुत, कष्ट नाना तैं सह्यो ।
 सो ग्यान, ध्यान, बिराग, अनुभव जातना-पावक दह्यो ॥
 अति खेद ब्याकुल, अलप बल, छिन एक बोलि न आवई ।
 तव तीव्र कष्ट न जान कोउ, सब लोग हरषित गावई ॥ 136/5 ॥

(136/5)

puni bahubidhi galāni jiya mānī. aba jaga jā'i bhajauṁ cakrapānī.
 aisēhi kari bicāra cupa sādhi. prasava-pavana prērē'u aparādhī.
 prēryō jō parama pracaṇḍa māruta, kaṣṭa nānā tair̥m sahyō.
 sō gyāna, dhyāna, birāga, anubhava jātana-pāvaka dahyō.
 ati khēda byākula, alapa bala, china ēka bōli na āva'i.
 tava tīvra kaṣṭa na jāna kō'u, saba lōga haraṣita gāva'i. 136/5.

Verse no. 136/5—Then you had regretted and repented in your heart (that in your previous births you had not worshipped the Lord God) (*puni bahubidhi galāni jiya mānī*), and said to yourself (i.e. promised and made a solemn vow) that after taking birth, this time around you would surely worship and have devotion for the discus-bearing Lord (Vishnu) (*aba jaga jā'i bhajauṁ cakrapānī*).

As soon as made this decision and became silent (*aisēhi kari bicāra cupa sādhi*), the wind of delivery (i.e. the muscular contraction of the walls of the womb that results in pushing the creature out of the womb and into the external world) activated you who was a cuprit and a sinner (*prasava-pavana prērē'u aparādhī*).

Under the forceful pressure of the powerful wind (*prēryō jō parama pracaṇḍa māruta*), and you had to suffer horribly in various ways at the time of delivery (i.e. taking birth) (*kaṣṭa nānā tair̥m sahyō*).

At that moment of fire and fury (*pāvaka*), all your wisdom, meditation on the divine form of the Lord, your sense of renunciation and the bitter experience of the womb were all charred (destroyed) beyond recognition (*dahyō*) so much so that you forgot everything due to the intolerably horrible pain at the time of delivery (*sō gyāna, dhyāna, birāga, anubhava jātana*). [The creature has to suffer horribly at

the time of birth, and all his previous vows and determinations that he had been making while lying idle in the mother's womb are forgotten in the turmoil during the moments of birth.]

You had become extremely distressed by the excessive pain and sufferings associated with birth, and being feeble in strength and weak at the time, you could not utter a word of prayer even for a moment (*ati khēda byākula, alapa bala, china ēka bōli na āva'ī*).

At that time, no one understood the extremely harsh agonies that you had to undergo (*tava tīvra kaṣṭa na jāna kō'u*). Instead, all those who had assembled to welcome you in this mundane world (such as your parents and other kin) were rejoicing at the birth of a male child, they were singing and celebrating (*saba lōga haraṣita gāva'ī*).

[To wit, it is such an irony that at the time when you were crying so loudly due to horrors and pains you were being subjected to, others whom you would later on call your kith and kin were laughing at you and your condition! How foolish are you indeed that you do not understand this thing: your sufferings were giving others enjoyment! And when you grew up, you began to regard these people as your dear ones, while forgetting all about the Lord who had protected you so well even in the hellish, suffocating and filthy environment of the mother's womb so much so that you had lain there quietly without crying, and sleeping peacefully.

This is perhaps the reason why a newly born infant cries out so wildly at the time of taking birth. He feels very disturbed at being so suddenly thrown into a noisy and blindingly illuminated external world from the serene and calm and dark environment of the mother's womb. No one understands why the child is crying, but he is doing so because his sufferings are far worse than what he had been suffering from while lying in the mother's womb quietly. The external world is so noisy, so brightly illuminated as to make the eyes shut themselves due to the intensity of light, and so full of hustle and bustle, whereas the creature had just a while ago experienced absolute calm and serenity in the mother's womb, enabling him to meditate upon the Lord and ponder deeply about so many things without any disturbance. In the womb he led a life like that of a recluse and a hermit, while now he is dragged against his will in the vortex of worldly activities.] (136/5).

(136/6)

बाल दसा जेते दुख पाये। अति असीम, नहिं जाहिं गनाये॥
छुधा-ब्याधि-बाधा भइ भारी। बेदन नहिं जानै महतारी॥
जननी न जानै पीर सो, केहि हेतु सिसु रोदन करै।
सोइ करै बिबिध उपाय, जातें अधिक तुव छाती जरै॥
कौमार, सैसव अरु किसोर अपार अघ को कहि सकै।
व्यतिरेक तोहि निरदय! महाखल! आन कहु को सहि सकै॥136/6॥

(136/6)

bāla dasā jētē dukha pāyē. ati asīma, nahim jāhim ganāyē.
 chudhā-byādhi-bādhā bha'i bhārī. bēdana nahim jānai mahatārī.
 janānī na jānai pīra sō, kēhi hētu sisu rōdana karai.
 sō'i karai bibidha upāya, jātēm adhika tuva chātī jarai.
 kaumāra, saisava aru kisōra apāra agha kō kahi sakai.
 vyatirēka tōhi niradaya! mahākhala! āna kahu kō sahi sakai. 136/6.

Verse no. 136/6—Then, during your infancy and childhood days, you had to suffer so much that it is difficult to count them later on (bāla dasā jētē dukha pāyē. ati asīma, nahim jāhim ganāyē).

For instance, hunger, disease and other sorts of problems that caused constant misery and perpetual agony had surrounded you almost always in one form or the other during this time of infancy and childhood (chudhā-byādhi-bādhā bha'i bhārī). You had then cried and wailed, but your mother could not actually know why you are suffering (bēdana nahim jānai mahatārī); she could not understand the real reason for your sufferings and pain, and why you are crying so much (janānī na jānai pīra sō, kēhi hētu sisu rōdana karai).

As a result, she made superficial attempts to calm you down because she was unaware of the real cause of your miseries (janānī na jānai pīra sō -- sō'i karai bibidha upāya). This caused extreme distress to you, and your heart-burn and miseries increase manifold (jātēm adhika tuva chātī jarai).

[For instance, a child cries due to an upset tummy, but the mother feeds the child more thinking that it is hungry. Similarly, the child may cry because it has a toothache or sore mouth, but the mother tries to feed it with warm milk in the belief that the child is crying due to hunger. This only enhances the suffering of the child; overfeeding aggravates the acidity and indigestion of the stomach and increases the problem instead of solving it. But unfortunately, the child is unable resist and do anything about it—for the more he tries to resist the more insistent the mother becomes in putting milk into his mouth. Tulsidas says that the creature has thus lost his independence, and is so dependent upon the mercy of others that pain and misery is forced upon him and he is unable to find a way out of it.]

Who can describe all the great sins and misdeeds that you commit during your days of infancy, childhood and adolescence (kaumāra, saisava aru kisōra apāra agha kō kahi sakai)? [During this time in his life the creature is so immature and ignorant that he does not know what is good and what is not. He commits so many mistakes during his childhood days and is forgiven for his misdemeanours precisely for this reason. But if he commits the same mistakes during his adulthood, the people take him to task and punish him.]

Oh you cruel and merciless fellow (niradaya)! Oh you most wicked one (mahākhala)! Except such a stubborn and dumb-witted fellow as you are, who else would be able to tolerate these sufferings, miseries, troubles and tribulations and still not repent for them and do something so that they are not repeated again (vyatirēka tōhi! āna kahu kō sahi sakai)? (136/6).

जोबन जुवती सँग रँग रात्यो । तब तू महा मोह—मद मात्यो ॥
 ताते तजी धरम—मरजादा । बिसरे तब सब प्रथम बिषादा ॥
 बिसरे बिषाद, निकाय—संकट समुझि नहिं फाटत हियो ।
 फिरि गर्भगत—आवर्त संसृतिचक्र जेहि होइ सोइ कियो ॥
 कृमि—भस्म—बिट—परिनाम तनु, तेहि लागि जग बैरी भयो ।
 परदार, परधन, द्रोहपर, संसार बाढ़ै नित नयो ॥136/7॥

(136/7)

jōbana juvatī saṁga raṁga rātyō. taba tū mahā mōha-mada mātyō.
 tātē tajī dharama-marajādā. bisarē taba saba prathama biṣādā.
 bisarē biṣāda, nikāya-saṅkaṭa samujhi nahim phāṭata hiyō.
 phiri garbhagata-āvarta sansṛticakra jēhi hō'i sō'i kiyō.
 kṛmi-bhasma-biṭa-parināma tanu, tēhi lāgi jaga bairī bhayō.
 paradāra, paradhana, drōhapara, sansāra bārhai nita nayō. 136/7.

Verse no. 136/7—During your adulthood days, you were trapped in a vicious grip of passions, infatuations, cravings and lusting for a young woman (jōbana juvatī saṁga raṁga rātyō). At that time you had become wild and intoxicated due to your unbridled ignorance, desires, pride, vanity, haughtiness and hypocrisy (taba tū mahā mōha-mada mātyō).

Maddened, driven and galvanised by the energy, the dynamism and the enthusiasm that is characteristic of adulthood, alongwith its inherent tendency to be attracted to the sensual pleasures of the objects of the world, you had broken all the sanctified limits of Dharma (principles of right conduct, probity, propriety, ethics and morality) and started behaving recklessly and arrogantly (tātē tajī dharama-marajādā), and in your delusions you had all but forgotten about the sufferings, agonies and miseries incurred earlier (during your days in the mother's womb and later on during your childhood days as narrated in above verses) (bisarē taba saba prathama biṣādā).

Having forgotten all about your earlier sufferings, agonies and miseries (bisarē biṣādā), and you had started indulging in various sins and vices.

Oh you fool. Doesn't your heart burst with fear at the mere thought of all the sufferings, the pains, the miseries and the tribulations that you would have to face in the future for your mischiefs and misdemeanours that you are so willingly committing now (during your adulthood) (nikāya-saṅkaṭa samujhi nahim phāṭata hiyō)¹?

[¹You had already experienced the bitter fruit of your past evil deeds when you had to suffer horribly in your mother's womb and when you were dependent upon others during your childhood days as narrated in the previous verses. At that time you had made solemn vows and promises to mend your ways so that you won't have to undergo such sufferings again. But you are so stupid and dumb that it looks you have forgotten everything now—because you are repeating the same sort of mistakes that you had committed in your previous birth that had landed you in the quagmire of miseries earlier in the present life. Oh you fool—in your utter ignorance and in the shadow of delusions it appears that you have become drunk with the drink of pride and arrogance of your youth inasmuch as you are doing the same sort of things

against which you had pledged yourself before the Lord God while you were in the mother's womb, hanging upside down—refer verse nos. 136/3-4.]

In your ignorance and wildness you have started doing repeatedly the same sort of evil deeds that will make you fall in the pit of another womb and enter into the vicious cycle of birth and death all over again (*phiri garbhagata-āvarta sansṛticakra jēhi hō'i sō'i kiyō*)! [Oh God gracious! What has happened to your wisdom and sense of self-preservation? Have they gone out of the window?!!]

You had been utterly selfish in creating enmity, malice, ill-will, jealousy and discord with the world (i.e. with everyone else in this world—“*tēhi lāgi jaga bairī bhayō*”) for the comfort and pleasure and gratification of your gross perishable body that would betray you sooner or later (when you die), and then this body itself, which you love so much and for which you have committed so much sins and evil deeds, would be instrumental in dragging you in a pit of intense miseries and excessive pain when it will be infested with worms and maggots, when smite, flies and insects will feed on it, and when it would be cast to the dump in mud, ash, filth and faecal matters upon your death (*kṛmi-bhasma-bīṭa-parināma tanu*)²!

[²On death, if you are buried, you would be eaten by germs and worms; if you are consigned to flames, you turn to ashes; if you lie unattended, the body will decay and it would turn into faecal and decaying flesh matter upon which insects, dogs, vultures would feast. How horrible is the fate of your body for which you do so much, and which would have no second thoughts in making you suffer on its behalf.

Remember: Here the word ‘you’ refers to ‘the true self’ of the living being, which is his Atma or pure conscious soul, and ‘not the gross physical body’.]

Infatuation with other people's women (*paradāra*), coveting greedily and wistfully their wealth (*paradhana*), and having enmity, spite and malice towards them (*drōhapara*)—all these evil tendencies have been steadily increasing in you (*sansāra bāṛhai nita nayō*) (136/7).

(136/8)

देखत ही आई बिरुधार्ई । जो तैं सपनेहुँ नाहिं बुलाई ॥
ताके गुन कछु कहे न जाहीं । सो अब प्रगट देखु तनु माहीं ॥
सो प्रगट तनु जरजर जराबस, ब्याधि, सूल सतावई ।
सिर—कंप, इंद्रिय—सक्ति प्रतिहत, बचन काहु न भावई ॥
गृहपालहूतैं अति निरादर, खान—पान न पावई ।
ऐसिहु दसा न बिराग तहँ, तृष्णा—तरंग बढ़ावई ॥136/8॥

(136/8)

dēkhata hī ā'ī birudhā'ī. jō taim sapanēhum' nāhim bulā'ī.
tākē guna kachu kahē na jāhīm. sō aba pragaṭa dēkhu tanu māhīm.
sō pragaṭa tanu jarajara jarābasa, byādhi, sūla satāva'ī.

sira-kampa, indriya-sakti pratihata, bacana kāhu na bhāva'ī.
gr̥hapālahūtēm ati nirādara, khāna-pāna na pāva'ī.
aisihu dasā na birāga taham̐, tṛṣṇā-taraṅga barhāva'ī. 136/8.

Verse no. 136/8—[This verse outlines the horrors of old age.]

Almost un-announced and un-seen and un-welcomed, the old age has arrived (dēkhata hī ā'ī birudhā'ī), which you had never invited even in your dreams (and which you had never expected would ever bother you during the time you had been young and enjoying the world to the hilt) (jō tair̥m sapanēhum̐ nāhirm̐ bulā'ī)!

The agonising situation and the miseries of old age are impossible to describe fully as they are so huge and wide in their reach (tākē guna kachu kahē na jāhirm̐). One not need to do so, because you can see yourself the visible effect of old age on your own body itself, and you can witness how it affects you directly (sō aba pragaṭa dēkhu tanu māhirm̐).

See its visible effect on your body (sō pragaṭa tanu)—it has become feeble, worn-out, decrepit, decayed and infirm (jarajara). Due to old age (jarābasa), different diseases and countless forms of physical discomfort and pains are tormenting you endlessly (byādhi, sūla satāva'ī), the head is shaking and trembling (like a leaf on a tree) (sira-kampa), and the organs of your body have lost their former abilities and strength, their functions are steadily slowing down (indriya-sakti pratihata).

What a pitiable condition it is indeed! No one likes to hear you speak, they all shun you (and everyone turns a deaf ear to your mutterings) (bacana kāhu na bhāva'ī). Even the pet animals (such as your favourite dog) which guards your house has started neglecting and insulting you (gr̥hapālahūtēm ati nirādara).

No one bothers about your meals and drinks so much so that you don't get enough to eat or drink (khāna-pāna na pāva'ī).

[You feel utterly neglected and humiliated; you are subjected to interminable insults and scorn, and you are treated with repugnance and indignity wherever you go by those for whom you had sacrificed all your life and happiness earlier. Even the pet dog is served its meals at the proper feeding time, but no one bothers about you and your hunger. What's more, you don't even get sufficient to eat or drink.]

Inspite of such a pitiful, miserable and horrible state, you still do not get true renunciation (aisihu dasā na birāga taham̐). Even in this horrible condition, you go on increasing your lust, greed, avarice, passions, desires etc. (tṛṣṇā-taraṅga barhāva'ī). [To wit, in spite of being told about your inevitable fate and seeing others suffering in their old age, you are so dumb-witted that still you don't seem to understand, and you don't make amends while still there is time for you. In spite of being aware of the horrors of old age, you continue to fritter away your youthful energy and time in pursuit of this deluding world and its false charms, instead of making efforts to ensure a secure spiritual destiny for yourself.] (136/8).

(136/9)

कहि को सके महाभव तेरे । जनम एकके कछुक गनेरे ॥

चारि खानि संतत अवगाहीं । अजहूँ न करु बिचार मन माहीं ॥
 अजहूँ बिचारु, बिकार तजि, भजु राम जन-सुखदायकं ।
 भवसिंधु दुस्तर जलस्थं, भजु चक्रधर सुरनायकं ॥
 बिनु हेतु करुनाकर, उदार, अपार-माया-तारनं ।
 कैवल्य-पति, जगपति, रमापति, प्रानपति, गतिकारनं ॥ 136/9 ॥

(136/9)

kahi kō sakē mahābhava tērē. janama ēkakē kachuka ganērē.
 cāri khāni santata avagāhīm. ajahum̃ na karu bicāra mana māhīm.
 ajahūm̃ bicāru, bikāra taji, bhaju rāma jana-sukhadāyakam̃.
 bhavasindhu dustara jalaratham̃, bhaju cakradhara suranāyakam̃.
 binu hētu karunākara, udāra, apāra-māyā-tāranam̃.
 kaivalya-pati, jagapati, ramāpati, prānapati, gatikāranam̃. 136/9.

Verse no. 136/9—Only a few of your troubles and tribulations of this birth that have been causing you so much miseries have been counted and listed above (in verse nos. 136/1-136/8) (janama ēkakē kachuka ganērē). If this is the situation in a single birth, then say who can tell the great stories of your immense sufferings that you had to endure in your numerous previous births (kahi kō sakē mahābhava tērē).

You have had to wander in either of the four forms of births that all living beings have to pass through (cāri khāni santata avagāhīm)¹.

[¹The 4 forms of births are as follows:- (a) 'Pindaj'—those born from an embryo formed in a mother's womb such as a human being and other animals; (b) 'Andaj'—those born from an egg outside the womb such as birds; (c) 'Swadej'—those born by self division of the cell without fertilisation, e.g. the one-celled organisms such as Amoeba; it also means 'born of perspiration or sweat' such as lice etc.; and (d) 'Udbhij'—those born out of a seed, e.g. plants.]

Yet you do not think deeply on this aspect in your mind even after undergoing so much sufferings (ajahum̃ na karu bicāra mana māhīm).

Oh come on, wake up to the realities; even now think over it (ajahūm̃ bicāru) and leave your ignorance and arrogance and all other types of spiritual faults that you have had till now (because its still time for you to make amends for your mistakes) (bikāra taji). [So then, what should you do? Here it is:--]

Worship and venerate Lord Sri Ram who gives joy and all types of happiness to his devotees (bhaju rāma jana-sukhadāyakam̃). The Lord is like a huge and robust ship (jalaratham̃) as far as crossing of this formidably fierce and difficult ocean of mundane life in this gross perishable world is concerned (bhavasindhu dustara). Therefore, be wise and prudent for your own good, and worship the Lord who bears a discus (bhaju cakradhara) and who is the God of all the Gods (suranāyakam̃). [To wit, just as it is easy for a person to cross an ocean aboard a ship, it would be very easy and comfortable for you to get over all your worries and miseries associated with this life if you take shelter of Lord Ram and offer your prayers to him, for then the merciful Lord is sure to extend his hand to you to help

you out of your problems. The Lord who holds a discus is a reference to Lord Vishnu who had incarnated as Lord Ram.]

The Lord shows benevolence, kindness and mercy without any selfish interests, for the Lord is absolutely selfless in his attitude (*binu hētu karunākara*); he is enormously generous and magnanimous (*udāra*); he can help overcome the great delusions and ignorance which have overpowered you and clouded your wisdom (*apāra-māyā-tāraṇam*). [To wit, if you submit yourself before Lord Ram, then you need not worry about the knowledge of scriptures and the myriad means of attaining liberation and deliverance, for the Lord would take care of your welfare, both the temporal as well as the spiritual.]

He is the merciful Lord who grants the supreme and the most exalted state of existence for the soul known as ‘Kaivalya’, literally meaning ‘one of its only kind’, which in practical terms means attainment of spiritual salvation and emancipation to the creature (*kaivalya-pati*).

He is the only Lord God of this entire creation (*jagapati*). He is the Lord of Laxmi (i.e. of all sorts of prosperity and well-being in this world) (*ramāpati*). He is the Lord who is the Supreme Soul or the Atma of this creation, and by extension of all the living beings because all have this ‘soul’ in their bodies, and this ‘soul’ is actually the true identity of all living beings (*prānapati*)². The Lord is a bestower of spiritual bliss, and of liberation and deliverance from all miseries and torments that afflict the creature (*gatikāraṇam*).

[²The word “*prānapati*” also means the Lord who is very dear to the life and soul of a creature. In this sense, Lord Ram is the dearest Lord of all living beings.] (136/9).

The importance of Saints

(136 / 10)

रघुपति-भगति सुलभ, सुखकारी । सो त्रयताप-सोक-भय-हारी ॥
 बिनु सतसंग भगति नहिं होई । ते तब मिलैं द्रवै जब सोई ॥
 जब द्रवै दीनदयालु राघव, साधु-संगति पाइये ।
 जेहि दरस-परस-समागमादिक पापरासि नसाइये ॥
 जिनके मिले दुख-सुख समान, अमानतादिक गुन भये ।
 मद-मोह लोभ-बिषाद-क्रोध सुबोधतैं सहजहिं गये ॥136 / 10 ॥

(136/10)

raghupati-bhagati sulabha, sukhakārī. sō trayatāpa-sōka-bhaya-hārī.
 binu satasaṅga bhagati nahim hō'ī. tē taba milaim dravai jaba sō'ī.
 jaba dravai dīnadayālu rāghava, sādhu-saṅgati pā'iyē.
 jēhi darasa-parasa-samāgamādika pāparāsi nasā'iyē.

jinakē milē dukha-sukha samāna, amānatādika guna bhayē.
mada-mōha lōbha-biṣāda-krōdha subōdhatēm sajahim gayē. 136/10.

Verse no. 136/10—Devotion and affection (bhagati) for Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) is easy and simple to have, and it gives immense bliss, joy and happiness to the creature (raghupati-bhagati sulabha, sukhakārī). They eliminate the fear of the three types of sorrows that torment a creature¹; they are an eliminator of all sorts of worries, miseries and fears that make the creature suffer (sō trayatāpa-sōka-bhaya-hārī).

[¹The three types of sorrows that cause problems for a creature are called the “Traitaps”. They are described in verse no. 17, stanza no. 2, and verse no. 81, stanza no. 1 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.]

But that devotion and affection for the Lord that is known as ‘Bhakti’ cannot be had without a communion with and the company of saints and pious souls (binu satasaṅga bhagati nahim hōī), and these saints and pious souls are met only by the grace and blessings of Lord Sri Ram, only when the Lord wishes it to be so by being gracious upon the selected devotee (tē taba milaim dravai jaba sōī).

Indeed it is true that company of saintly people is possible only when Lord Ram feels merciful for the creature and blesses him with this boon (jaba dravai dīnadayālu rāghava, sādhu-saṅgati pā'iyē)².

[²To wit, when Lord Sri Ram shows grace and mercy upon the creature then only is communion and contacts with saints possible for him. The glory, importance and virtue of saints and pious people has been elucidated and enumerated in other books of Tulsidas also, viz. (i) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 37—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 41; (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 375—378, 381; and (iii) Vairagya Sandipani, verse nos. 8—42.]

By the touch, the sight, the company and the communion of those saintly souls, all the accumulated sins, evils, vices and faults of the creature (jēhi darasa-parasa-samāgamādika) are completely uprooted and destroyed (pāparāsi nasā'iyē).

By this contact with saints, one learns the values and importance of the virtues of dispassion and detachment, and to treat alike both the sorrows and the joys of life (jinakē milē dukha-sukha samāna). One also learns the virtues of practicing equanimity and renunciation in one's life, and is motivated to develop these qualities in himself by seeing the example of these saints and holy souls (amānatādika guna bhayē).

Forsooth, the company of saints helps one to become wise and enlightened so much so that he inculcates many good and saintly virtues and noble qualities in himself (subōdhatēm). The positive effect of this is that many negativities that are inherently present in a person, such as ego, arrogance and haughtiness (“Mada”), delusions, attractions and attachments (“Moha”), greed and yearnings (“Lobha”), feeling perplexed, grieved and sorrowful (“Vishad”), and anger (“Krodha”), all gradually go away on their own without making much effort to eliminate them (mada-mōha lōbha-biṣāda-krōdha sajahim gayē). (136/10).

Realisation of True 'Self'

(136 / 11)

सेवत साधु द्वैत-भय भागै । श्रीरघुबीर-चरन लय लागै ॥
 देह-जनित बिकार सब त्यागै । तब फिरि निज स्वरूप अनुरागै ॥
 अनुराग सो निज रूप जो जगत्तें बिलच्छन देखिये ।
 संतोष, सम, सीतल सदा दम, देहवन्त न लेखिये ॥
 निरमल, निरामय, एकरस, तेहि हरष-सोक न ब्यापई ।
 त्रैलोक-पावन सो सदा जाकी दसा ऐसी भई ॥136 / 11 ॥

(136/11)

sēvata sādhu dvaita-bhaya bhāgai. śrīraghubīra-carana laya lāgai.
 dēha-janita bikāra saba tyāgai. taba phiri nija svarūpa anurāgai.
 anurāga sō nija rūpa jō jagatēm bilacchana dēkhiyē.
 santōṣa, sama, sītala sadā dama, dēhavanta na lēkhiyē.
 niramala, nirāmaya, ēkarasa, tēhi haraṣa-sōka na byāpaī.
 trailōka-pāvana sō sadā jākī dasā aisī bhaī. 136/11.

Verse no. 136/11—By serving such wise saints, one gets freedom from the fears (and the doubts) arising from the philosophy of 'Dwaitya' (the dual nature of existence; whether what one experiences in this world is true or false; the sense of mine and yours; this life and the life hereafter; the mortality of life vis-à-vis the eternity of the soul; etc) (sēvata sādhu dvaita-bhaya bhāgai)¹.

[¹When the creature becomes wise, enlightened and self-realised as a reward of his contact with learned saints, he begins to understand that the essence of life is not what is seen and observed by the sense organs of perception of the body in the form of the gross mundane external world of material sense objects, but it is something very subtle and sublime in the form of the 'Atma' which is pure consciousness. This Atma is the 'true self' of the creature, and it is an universal entity. This Atma lives in all living beings as their individual self at the microcosmic level of existence, and as the Supreme Atma or the Parmatma at the macrocosmic level of existence.

Further, this Atma of the individual is a manifestation of the cosmic Atma represented by Lord Ram. This being the case, the wise aspirant sees his Lord all around him. With the omnipresence of his Lord who is ready to give him protection, where is the cause of fear from any quarter?

The Atma is not a gross visible thing like the body for it is subtle and invisible by its nature; it is eternal and imperishable unlike the body which is subject to decay and death. This realisation eliminates the sense of duality in creation and brings about uniformity.

The thus-realised creature begins to see the same Lord in the form of the 'consciousness' or the 'Atma' everywhere, in all the creatures, in the animate as well

as the inanimate, in the cosmic form of Nature and its vast canvas of beauty, in the outside as well as the inside of all that is visible or invisible. This universal view of existence and the sense of uniformity in its true essence removes fears of death and life, fears of the future vis-à-vis the present. One has no enemies or friends, for all the creatures are one and the same for him. Obviously, this view removes all cause of malice and ill-will, and this paves the way for spread of the virtues of love and brotherhood all around. In this scenario, there is no fear from any quarter.

Again, when a wise creature realises that the ‘Atma’ is his true identity and it is pure consciousness that is universal, immortal and transcendental, then all fears of death are erased.

These ideas are elaborated below in the following stanzas.]

The benefit of this development is that one begins to focus his attention on the holy feet of Lord Ram, the Lord God (śrīraghubīra-carana laya lāgai).

All the faults and problems associated with the gross body and the equally gross world are easily done away with (dēha-janita bikāra saba tyāgai), and the aspirant begins to learn to experience the bliss associated with one’s Atma that is one’s true self and pure consciousness (taba phiri nija svarūpa anurāgai).

Indeed, when the wise and enlightened person realises the greatness, the majesty and the divinity of his true form (bilacchana dēkhiyē) as being the ‘pure consciousness’ that is distinct and separate from his gross body, he begins to love and adore it and develop affection for it (anurāga sō nija rūpa jō jagatēm). [As soon as this reality dawns upon him, he begins to remain indifferent to the gross body but pays special attention to his Atma.]

The condition of a person who attains this wonderful state of existence wherein he has acquainted himself with the pure conscious Atma residing within his own self, i.e. when he has become ‘self realised’, is unique, fantastically wonderful, most eclectic and worthy of laurels to say the least (bilacchana dēkhiyē). Having contentedness, equanimity, evenness, fortitude, forbearance, calmness, serenity, self-control of the sense organs, peace of mind, heart and demeanours—all become a part of his character, his nature and his life (santōṣa, sama, sītala sadā dama).

He lives in a transcendental state of existence so much so that he begins to see that his physical body that is perishable and gross as well as subject to so many pains and miseries is not his ‘true self’, and that ‘his true identity’ is an entity known as the Atma that is pure consciousness which is eternal, blissful, subtle and sublime (dēhavanta na lēkhiyē).

The result of this realisation is that the person automatically becomes pure and holy, and is freed from all worldly taints which are like a moral disease for him (niramala, nirāmaya).

He becomes steady in his belief of oneness of his soul with the cosmic Soul, as well as the fact that the truth and reality in this world is always the same in spite of the external diversity that is visible, and this attitude makes him calm, uniform and unruffled; he develops the virtues of equanimity and fortitude (ēkarasa).

Inculcation of these grand virtues ensures that joys and sorrows do not move him or affect him at all; he remains unruffled, still and calm under both (tēhi haraṣa-sōka na byāpaī).

[To wit, he is neither excited nor depressed; he treats all circumstances with exceptional poise and dispassion. Nothing is too good for him to excite him, nor too bad to depress him. He is now free from all the imaginary pains and miseries that had been tormenting him till now as these were all related to his gross physical body, and not to the Atma. Thereafter, such a self-realised person never suffers from any misery and sorrow that are so common in this world, but rather lives in a perpetual state of blissfulness, happiness and joy.]

A person who attains this eclectic and transcendental state of existence marked by eternal blissfulness, tranquillity and equanimity and other such majestic virtues as enumerated herein above (*jāki dasā aisī bha'i*), is the one who can purify the whole world by showing it the correct path that leads to contentedness and happiness (*trailōka-pāvana sō sadā*) (because he knows the path and how to walk on it to reach one's goal in life; he is the proper guide for others) (136/11).

(136 / 12)

जो तेहि पंथ चलै मन लाई । तौ हरि काहे न होहिं सहाई ॥
जो मारग श्रुति-साधु दिखावै । तेहि पथ चलत सबै सुख पावै ॥
पावै सदा सुख हरि-कृपा, संसार-आसा तजि रहै ।
सपनेहुँ नहीं सुख द्वैत-दरसन, बात कोटिक को कहै ॥
द्विज, देव, गुरु, हरि, संत बिनु संसार-पार न पाइये ।
यह जानि तुलसीदास त्रासहरन रमापति गाइये ॥ 136 / 12 ॥

(136/12)

jō tēhi pantha calai mana lā'i. tau hari kāhē na hōhim sahā'i.
jō māraga śruti-sādhu dikhāvai. tēhi patha calata sabai sukha pāvai.
pāvai sadā sukha hari-kṛpā, sansāra-āsā taji rahai.
sapanēhum' nahīm sukha dvaita-darasana, bāta kōṭika kō kahai.
dvija, dēva, guru, hari, santa binu sansāra-pāra na pā'iyē.
yaha jāni tulasīdāsa trāsaharana ramāpati gā'iyē. 136/12.

Verse no. 136/12—Say, why will the Lord God not help those who walk on this noble path (*jō tēhi pantha calai mana lā'i*; tau hari kāhē na hōhim sahā'i), the path which has been shown by the Vedas (scriptures) and endorsed by holy saints (*jō māraga śruti-sādhu dikhāvai*), for it leads one and all to obtain all types of happiness, peace, joy and contentedness (*tēhi patha calata sabai sukha pāvai*).

The 'Sadhak' (aspirant; seeker) who walks on this path always feels happy and cheerful because he is blessed by the Lord God himself (*pāvai sadā sukha hari-kṛpā*), and therefore he does not have to depend upon the world for anything he wants. So he stops expecting anything from the mundane world, for all his needs are now taken care of by the Lord (*sansāra-āsā taji rahai*)¹.

[¹By the grace of God, such a seeker attains eternal and abiding bliss, and he realises that the bliss and happiness that he obtains by this method are sustainable and

true in nature as compared to their false, transient and impermanent nature as obtained from the world. Thus, he stops pursuing the sense objects of the world in his quest for peace, happiness, joy and pleasures, but turns inwards to his 'pure conscious self' to seek them.

A wise man becomes 'self-realised' and experiences the ultimate bliss and joy that comes with the understanding that his 'true self' is not the gross body but the pure consciousness that is within his own inner-self in the form of his blissful Atma, that the world is perishable while his self is eternal, and that all the pleasures and comforts that this perishable world seems to offer to him are not only limited to the gross body which is also perishable like the world but are impermanent and transient as well as the root of grief and pain in the long run.]

There are countless things to say and equally countless arguments for and against a proposition, but why bother about them (*bāta kōṭika kō kahai*). One thing is for sure—if one sees 'Dwaitya' (a sense of duality) in this world, then no matter what anyone says or preaches, true happiness and peace will always elude the creature; one can never expect to have abiding peace, bliss, happiness and contentedness even in one's dreams if one is misled by this idea (*sapanēhum nahīm sukha dvaita-darasana*)².

[²If a person sees his true self, which is pure consciousness, as being distinct from the Supreme Self which is known as cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading and universal in nature, if he sees distinction between mine and yours, me and he etc., then he can never ever find peace in this world.

To wit, real happiness, true peace and bliss that is eternal and abiding lies in becoming self-realised in the oneness of the 'individual's self' and the 'supreme Self' known as the Lord God or Brahm. And what is this 'self'? It is 'pure consciousness' both at the individual level and the universal level of existence. This realisation immediately creates a bond of kinship between the creature and the Lord God for the truth of both is the same 'consciousness'.

All living beings have their own independent bodies, but their true self, the essence of their being, the factor that defines them as a 'living entity' as opposed to a non-living thing is not their bodies but the pure consciousness that resides in these bodies. Though the physical bodies may be different but the basic factor that defines all living beings, i.e. the pure consciousness, is the one and the same in all. Hence, there is no cause and locus-standi for the concept of 'duality' to ever disturb the peace of mind of an enlightened person in this world.

In the context of the devotee and the Lord God, therefore, a self-realised and enlightened devotee understands that the Lord God whom he worships and adores does not live away from him, but that the Lord resides in his own inner-self as his 'Atma' or 'pure consciousness'. The essence and the truth of the devotee and the Lord God is the same non-dual entity known as 'Consciousness'. This immediately removes the distance and the distinction between the devotee and his Lord God—and the former begins to feel one with the Lord himself. He has nowhere to go to seek his Lord, for the Lord resides in his own self! This realisation is the pinnacle of enlightenment and spiritual wisdom; it is the source of abiding bliss and eternal joy because this consciousness is eternal and imperishable as opposed to the gross physical body.

To wit and in all sooth, this understanding, this wisdom and realisation is equivalent to crossing this seemingly endless ocean symbolised by this mundane, gross and perishable world that is actually like an ocean of endless miseries, pain, grief and torments for the creature.

The world no longer instills any kind of fear in the heart of the creature; the world no longer tempts the creature with its false charms and allurements of comfort, happiness and joy; the world does not bother the creature. The creature becomes neutral to it—both to its charms as well as to its sorrows. He now realises that the happiness and joy that he gets from the gross world are of no consequence as they are temporary and shallow, and they are dimmed by the intensity and depth of the happiness and joy that is got by realising the presence of the pure consciousness inside one's own self because it stands for the presence of the Supreme Lord God, who is a fount of eternal peace and bliss, within one's own self.

Similarly, the wisened creature also realises that all the sorrows and pains of the gross world, as well as its joys and comforts, are all not only transient but also limited to the gross organs of the equally gross body. Since the 'true self' is not this gross body, rather it is the pure conscious Atma that resides within this body, therefore nothing of the external gross world really matters to a wise creature anymore. He has literally side-stepped and skipped the puddle of the world, preventing himself from getting dirty and any slush and filth getting stuck to him!]

It is important to understand that one cannot cross this ocean represented by this world without the help of one's elders, the gods, teacher, the deity one reveres and adores, saints and holy men etc. (because they are one's true and selfless trusted friend, and they know the path one ought to follow to reach this goal) (*dvija, dēva, guru, hari, santa binu sansāra-pāra na pā'iyē*).

Tulsidas says that after understanding all these things, one should sing the divine glories of Lord Ramapati (i.e. Sri Ram) (*yaha jāni tulasīdāsa -- ramāpati gā'iyē*), the Lord who removes all sufferings, miseries and torments of his devotees (*trāsaharana*)³.

[³The devotee worships and adores Lord Ram, the cosmic Lord who is also the Lord of Rama, the goddess of prosperity and well-being, with the hope that he too would find eternal peace and rest for himself like those saints and wise people, that he too would be able to overcome the miseries associated with this world like them, and that he too would be able to attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for his soul in due course of time like done by pious souls.

The word '*Ramāpati*' refers to Lord Vishnu, the Lord God and the divine husband of goddess Laxmi who is also known as Rama. Lord Vishnu had manifested himself as Lord Sri Ram whom Tulsidas adores as his Lord God.] (136/12).

The Immense Effects of Lord's Grace

Rāga Bilāvala

जोपै कृपा रघुपति कृपालुकी, बैर औरके कहा सरै ।
 होइ न बाँको बार भगतको, जो कोउ कोटि उपाय करै ॥1॥
 तकै नीचु जो मीचु साधुकी, सो पामर तेहि मीचु मरै ।
 बेद—बिदित प्रहलाद—कथा सुनि, को न भगति—पथ पाउँ धरै? ॥2॥
 गज उधारि हरि थप्यो बिभीषन, ध्रुव अबिचल कबहूँ न टरै ।
 अंबरीष की साप सुरति करि, अजहूँ महामुनि ग्लानि गरै ॥3॥
 सों धौँ कहा जु न कियो सुजोधन, अबुध आपने मान जरै ।
 प्रभु—प्रसाद सौभाग्य बिजय—जस, पांडवनै बरिआइ बरै ॥4॥
 जोइ जोइ कूप खनैगो परकहँ, सो सठ फिरि तेहि कूप परै ।
 सपनेहुँ सुख न संतद्रोहीकहँ, सुरतरु सोउ बिष—फरनि फरै ॥5॥
 हैं काके द्वै सीस ईसके जो हठि जनकी सीवैं चरै
 तुलसिदास रघुबीर—बाहुबल सदा अभय, काहू न डरै ॥6॥

(137)

jōpai kṛpā raghupati kṛpālukī, baira aurakē kahā sarai.
 hō'i na bām̐kō bāra bhagatakō, jō kō'u kōṭi upāya karai. 1.
 takai nīcu jō mīcu sādhuṁkī, sō pāmara tēhi mīcu marai.
 bēda-bidita prahalāda-kathā suni, kō na bhagati-patha pā'um̐ dharai?. 2.
 gaja udhāri hari thapyō bibhīṣana, dhruva abicala kabahūm̐ na ṭarai.
 ambarīṣa kī sāpa surati kari, ajahum̐ mahāmuni glāni garai. 3.
 sōm̐ dhauṁ kahā ju na kiyō sujōdhana, abudha āpanē māna jarai.
 prabhu-prasāda saubhāgya bijaya-jasa, pāṇḍavanai bari'ā'i barai. 4.
 jō'i jō'i kūpa khanaigō parakaham̐, sō saṭha phiri tēhi kūpa parai.
 sapanēhum̐ sukha na santadrōhīkaham̐, surataru sō'u biṣa-pharani pharai. 5.
 haim̐ kākē dvai sīsa īsakē jō haṭhi janakī sīvam̐ carai
 tulasidāsa raghubīra-bāhubala sadā abhaya, kāhū na ḍarai. 6.

Verse no. 137—If Sri Raghupati (Lord Sri Ram) is favourably inclined, merciful and gracious towards someone, what will others gain by becoming his enemies (jōpai kṛpā raghupati kṛpālukī, baira aurakē kahā sarai)?

Even a hair of the devotee of the Lord cannot be broken (or no harm can be done to him) even if others try millions of ways and adopt countless tactics to torment him (hō'i na bām̐kō bāra bhagatakō, jō kō'u kōṭi upāya karai). [To wit, if Lord Ram loves a person, if the Lord has extended his umbrella of protection over someone, no harm can come to him from any quarter no matter how hard his adversaries try and try.] (1).

A wicked, sinful and mean person (nīcu, pāmara) who looks towards death of a saintly person or causing harm to him in any manner (takai jō mīcu sādhuṁkī) would die himself and suffer immensely (sō tēhi mīcu marai).

In this context, the story of Prahalad¹ has been made famous by the Vedas (bēda-bidita prahalāda-kathā). Say, who is so unfortunate and foolish that he would not to step on the path of devotion and worship of the Lord (kō na bhagati-patha pā'um̐ dharai) after hearing that incident (kathā -- suni)? (2).

[¹The story of Prahalad is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 57 of this book 'Vinai Patrika'. Prahalad was a child but he adopted the path of devotion for Lord Vishnu which his demon father did not like. The father tried to force his son Prahalad to abandon this faith in Lord Vishnu, even subjecting him to immense sufferings for his adherence to his beliefs. Finally, when Prahalad refused to buckle, the demon drew a sword to kill him. At that instant, Lord Vishnu revealed himself as a 'half man and half lion' to kill the demon father and rescue Prahalad.

The idea here is that the Lord God is very kind towards his devotees, and if anyone makes them suffer, the Lord intervenes on the behalf of his devotees and punishes the offender. Understanding this fact, who would not like to have such a lord and master as his protector and guardian, one who would go out of his way to help those who are dependant upon him? Surely one cannot find such a selfless, kind and loving guardian and protector for himself in this world as he would find in Lord Ram.]

There are so many other instances as well. For example, Sri Hari (Lord Vishnu) had liberated Gajraaj (the king of elephants) from sure death (*gaja udhāri hari*); he had put Vibhishan on the throne (of Lanka) which he could not imagine even in his dreams (*thapyō bibhīṣana*); he gave Dhruva (a child devotee) such a stable state of existence that he does not have to change his position ever (though all other entities in this world are bound to undergo changes) (*dhruva abicala kabahūṃ na ṭarai*).

And of course, the famed story of king Ambarish is unique—for the sage Durvasha, who had cursed him, was so ashamed at himself on remembering his spiteful and vengeful nature, and the error of cursing Ambarish who was a devotee of Lord Vishnu, that the sage was almost died or buried himself in shame and lamented at his own evil temper, shortsightedness, arrogance, haughtiness and malicious nature (*ambarīṣa kī sāpa surati kari, ajahum mahāmuni glāni garai*)² (3).

[²The story of Gajraaj is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 57 of this book Vinai Patrika. Similarly, the story of Vibhishan is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 78, of Dhruva in verse no. 86, and of Ambarish in verse no. 98.]

Which evil and crooked means had Duryodhan not adopted to inflict torments and harassment to the Pandavas (*sōm dhaum kahā ju na kiyō sujōdhana*)? That stupid fellow kept on burning in his own haughtiness, arrogance, hypocrisy, pride and vanity (*abudha āpanē māna jarai*), while, by the grace of God (*prabhu-prasāda*), victory, good fortunes and good fame (*saubhāgya bijaya-jasa*) had willingly and automatically come to the humbled Pandavas (*pāṇḍavanai bari'ā'i barai*)³ (4).

[³The story of Duryodhan and the Pandavas is briefly narrated in a note appended to verse no. 97 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

Forsooth, a wicked person with a pervert mind and corrupt intellect who digs a well (or a pit, a grave) for others (*jō'i jō'i kūpa khanaigō parakaham*), falls into it himself (*sō saṭha phiri tēhi kūpa parai*).

Those who have malice, ill-will and animosity towards saintly persons (*santadrōhikaham*) cannot have happiness for themselves even in their dreams (*sapanēhum sukha na*). For them, even the Kalp Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree of the gods) will yield poisonous fruits (*surataru sō'u biṣa-pharani pharai*). [To wit, even the heavenly tree that naturally and normally gives sweet and succulent fruits to

one and all would turn hostile to such a selfish and pervert person, and gives him sour fruits as punishment.] (5).

Who has two heads⁴ (i.e. who can ever dare) to cross the limits and cause offense to the devotees of Lord Sri Ram (hair̥m kākē dvai sīsa īsakē jō haṭhi janakī sīvam̐ carai)?

[To wit, no one can dare to violate the peace, the tranquillity, the level of tolerance, the general welfare and well-being etc. of a devotee of Lord Ram? Not even a 'demon' who is depicted as having two horns on his head would imagine to do it, so what to talk of ordinary creatures?

⁴'Two heads' here might mean someone who is demon-like, who is abnormal, anomalous, cruel, animal-like and ferocious in his nature, demeanours and inclinations. The 'two heads' may refer to the 'two horns' that are depicted on the head of demons and other Asurs. It might also refer metaphorically to the fear of getting one head dashed or crushed or severed by the wrath of the saint or his protector, the Lord—then, at least, one head would survive.]

Tulsidas asserts that he who has the protection of the strong arms of Lord Sri Ram (tulasidāsa raghubīra-bāhubala) has nothing to be affright from any quarter (kāhū na ḍarai), and he is always fearless and carefree (sadā abhaya) (6).

The Lord's open Lotus-like Palms that symbolise the perpetual grant of Mercy and Grace upon the Devotee

(138)

कबहुँ सो कर-सरोज रघुनायक! धरिहौ नाथ सीस मेरे।
 जेहि कर अभय किये जन आरत, बारक बिबस नाम टेरे॥1॥
 जेहि कर-कमल कठोर संभुधनु भंजि जनक-संसय मेट्यो।
 जेहि कर-कमल उठाइ बंधु ज्यों, परम प्रीति केवट भेट्यो॥2॥
 जेहि कर-कमल कृपालु गीधकहँ, पिंड देइ निजधाम दियो।
 जेहि कर बालि बिदारि दास-हित, कपिकुल-पति सुग्रीव कियो॥3॥
 आयो सरन समीत बिभीषन, जेहि कर-कमल तिलक कीन्हों।
 जेहि कर गहि सर चाप असुर हति, अभयदान देवन्ह दीन्हों॥4॥
 सीतल सुखद छाँह जेहि करकी, मेटति पाप, ताप, माया।
 निसि-बासर तेहि कर-सरोजकी, चाहत तुलसिदास छाया॥5॥

(138)

kabahuṁ sō kara-sarōja raghunāyaka! dharihau nātha sīsa mērē.
 jēhi kara abhaya kiyē jana ārata, bāraka bibasa nāma ṭērē. 1.
 jēhi kara-kamala kaṭhōra sambhudhanu bhan̄ji janaka-sansaya mēṭyō.
 jēhi kara-kamala uṭhā'i bandhu jyōm̄, parama prīti kēvaṭa bhēṭyō. 2.
 jēhi kara-kamala kṛpālu gīdhakaham̄, piṇḍa dē'i nijadhāma diyō.
 jēhi kara bāli bidāri dāsa-hita, kapikula-pati sugrīva kiyō. 3.
 āyō sarana sabhīta bibhīṣana, jēhi kara-kamala tilaka kīnhōm̄.

jēhi kara gahi sara cāpa asura hati, abhayadāna dēvanha dīnhōm. 4.
 sītala sukhada chāmha jēhi karakī, mēṭati pāpa, tāpa, māyā.
 nisi-bāsara tēhi kara-sarōjakī, cāhata tulasidāsa chāyā. 5.

Verse no. 138—Oh Lord Raghunatha (Lord Ram, the Lord of the king Raghu's kingdom of Ayodhya)! Will you ever put your out-stretched and open lotus-like palms benevolently upon my head as a token of your blessings and benediction upon me (kabahum¹ sō kara-sarōja raghunāyaka! dharihau nātha sīsa mērē) like the way you had extended them for your other devotees who were extremely distressed and under great misery (jēhi kara abhaya kiyē jana ārata), when they had fervently called out your name with an earnest prayer to remove their fears, torments and agonies (bāraka bibasa nāma tērē) (1).

You had broken the hard and strong bow of Shiva by these same hands, and had thereby removed the extreme state of distress and mental agony through which king Janak was going through at that time. By this single act of yours, you had instantly given cheer and hope to Janak. Oh Lord, can't you extend a similar helping hand to me to help me overcome my own set of consternations, distresses, mental agonies and confusions like you had done for Janak? (jēhi kara-kamala kaṭhōra sambhudhanu bhanīji janaka-sansaya mēṭyō)¹.

Similarly oh Lord, will you not be gracious enough to pick me up and embrace me with the same lotus-like hands with which you had picked up Guha-Nishad (the boatman) who was lying prostrate in front of you, and had embraced him most affectionately like he were your own brother (without having any second thoughts or hesitation in doing so because of his low status in the hierarchy of society, and the fact that he was after all a lowly subject of the kingdom of Ayodhya of which you were a noble prince) (jēhi kara-kamala uṭhā'i bandhu jyōm, parama prīti kēvaṭa bhēṭyō)².

[¹King Janak was extremely worried and regretful about the fate of his daughter Sita because no one had been able to fulfil his vows of breaking Shiva's bow to marry her. At that time Lord Ram had broken the bow, and this immediately removed all the cause of sorrows of Janak. Refer to note appended to verse no. 134, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika.

²Guha was a boatman who had taken Lord Ram across the river Ganges when the Lord was on his way to the forest from Ayodhya. Guha had fallen at the feet of the Lord when the latter tried to pay him the charges for ferrying him across the river. At that time, the Lord had affectionately lifted Guha and embraced him. This story is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 134, stanza no. 4 of this book Vinai Patrika.

Oh Lord, this shows that you are extremely gracious and go out of your way to please those who submit before you, without bothering about formalities and adherence to the norms in a tradition bound society. Guha was not a sage or hermit; he was of a low caste and illiterate to the hilt. He had never done meditation or kept any religious vows. But still you thought it fit to embrace him and lift him to a high pedestal by declaring him to be like your own brother. This being the case, I also expect the same for my self.] (2).

Oh merciful and kind-hearted Lord (krpālu)! You had given your most exalted abode (i.e. the heaven) to the vulture (Jatau) after performing his last rites and cremating him

with the same lotus-like palms (hands) of yours as if the vulture was your own father (jēhi kara-kamala gīdhakaham̐, piṇḍa dē'i nijadhāma diyō)³.

You had used the same hands to slay Baali (the king of the monkey race and of the kingdom of Kishkindha) for the benefit and sake of your faithful servant (i.e. your follower and subordinate) Sugriv (the younger brother of Baali) who was later on made the king of the monkey-race (jēhi kara bāli bidāri dāsa-hita, kapikula-pati sugrīva kiyō)⁴. (3).

[³The story of Jatau is narrated in brief in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika.

⁴Similarly, the story of Baali and Sugriv is narrated in brief in a note appended to verse no. 25, stanza no. 4 of this book.]

You had used these same lotus-like hands to anoint Vibhishan, who was extremely scared (due to the enmity his powerful elder brother, the demon king Ravana, had with him) and had come as a refugee to seek shelter with you, on the throne of Lanka (āyō sarana sabhīta bibhīṣana, jēhi kara-kamala tilaka kīnhōm)⁵.

You had also used these same hands to hold the bow and arrow to destroy the demons who had been tormenting the Gods, and had thereby restored fearlessness and dignity to the Gods (jēhi kara gahi sara cāpa asura hatī, abhayadāna dēvanha dīnhōm)⁶. (4).

[⁵Vibhishan's story is narrated in brief in a note appended to verse no. 78, stanza no. 5 of this book Vinai Patrika.

⁶The Gods were tormented by the demons. Lord Vishnu had manifested in a human form of Lord Ram and killed these cruel demons in so as to free the Gods from their tormentors. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 181—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 187.]

Oh Lord! The cool, soothing and comforting shade (i.e. solace and succour) that these lotus-like open palms of yours provide to the creature against the scorching heat of miseries and torments provoked by his sins, numerous misdeeds, different kinds of worldly delusions and other existential problems (sītala sukhada chām̐ha jēhi karakī, mēṭati pāpa, tāpa, māyā), Tulsidas yearns to have the same shelter and he seeks to have refuge under the same shade of benediction and grace (cāhata tulasidāsa chāyā) that these lotus-like palm of your hands extend to other devotees of yours, every moment of his life, both in the night and the day (nisi-bāsara tēhi kara-sarōjakī) (5).

[Note—In this verse, Tulsidas has cited many instances when Lord Ram has extended the shade of protection of his open palms, which are compared here to an open lotus flower, to those who had come to seek refuge and shelter with him just like a huge tree provides shade to one and all who come to it seeking shelter from the scorching heat of the sun. So the saintly poet prays to the Lord to extend the same protection to him as well.]

The Menace of Kaliyug

दीनदयालु, दुरित-दारिद-दुख दुनी दुसह तिहुँ ताप तई है।
 देव दुवार पुकारत आरत, सबकी सब सुख हानि भई है॥1॥
 प्रभुके बचन, बेद-बुध-सम्मत, मम मूरति महिदेवमई है।
 तिनकी मति रिस-राग-मोह-मद, लोभ लालची लीलि लई है॥2॥
 राज-समाज कुसाज कोटि कटु कलपित कलुष कुचाल नई है।
 नीति, प्रतीति, प्रीति परमिति पति हेतुबाद हठि हेरि हई है॥3॥
 आश्रम-बरन-धरम-बिरहित जग, लोक-बेद-मरजाद गई है।
 प्रजा पतित, पाखंड-पापरत, अपने अपने रंग रई है॥4॥
 सांति, सत्य, सुभ रीति गई घटि, बढी कुरीति कपट-कलई है।
 सीदत साधु, साधुता सोचति, खल बिलसत, हुलसति खलई है॥5॥
 परमारथ स्वारथ, साधन भये अफल, सफल नहीं सिद्धि सई है।
 कामधेनु धरनी कलि-गोमर बिबस बिकल जामति न बई है॥6॥
 कलि-करनी बरनिये कहाँ लौं, करत फिरत बिनु टहल टई है।
 तापर दाँत पीसि कर मीजत, को जानै चित कहा टई है॥7॥
 त्यों त्यों नीच चढ़त सिर ऊपर, ज्यों ज्यों सीलबस ढील दई है।
 सरुष बरजि तरजिये तरजनी, कुम्हिलैहै कुम्हड़ेकी जई है॥8॥
 दीजै दादि देखि ना तौ बलि, मही मोद-मंगल रितई है।
 भरे भाग अनुराग लोग कहैं, राम कृपा-चितवनि चितई है॥9॥
 बिनती सुनि सानंद हेरि हँसि, करुना-बारि भूमि भिजई है।
 राम-राज भयो काज, सगुन सुभ, राजा राम जगत-बिजई है॥10॥
 समरथ बड़ो, सुजान सुसाहब, सुकृत-सैन हारत जितई है।
 सुजन सुभाव सराहत सादर, अनायास साँसति बितई है॥11॥
 उथपे थपन, उजारि बसावन, गई बहोरि बिरद सदई है।
 तुलसी प्रभु आरत-आरतिहर, अभयबाँह केहि केहि न दई है॥12॥

(139)

dīnadayālu, durita-dārida-dukha dunī dusaha tihum̐ tāpa ta'ī hai.
 dēva duvāra pukārata ārata, sabakī saba sukha hāni bha'ī hai. 1.
 prabhukē bacana, bēda-budha-sam'mata, mama mūrati mahidēvama'ī hai.
 tinakī mati risa-rāga-mōha-mada, lōbha lālacī lili la'ī hai. 2.
 rāja-samāja kusāja kōṭi kaṭu kalapita kaluṣa kucāla na'ī hai.
 nīti, pratīti, prīti paramiti pati hētubāda haṭhi hēri ha'ī hai. 3.
 āśrama-barana-dharama-birahita jaga, lōka-bēda-marajāda ga'ī hai.
 prajā patita, pākhaṇḍa-pāparata, apanē apanē raṅga ra'ī hai. 4.
 sānti, satya, subha rīti ga'ī ghaṭi, barhī kurīti kapaṭa-kala'ī hai.
 sīdata sādhu, sādhutā sōcati, khala bilasata, hulasati khala'ī hai. 5.
 paramāratha svāratha, sādhana bhayē aphala, saphala nahim̐ sid'dhi sa'ī hai.
 kāmadhēnu dharanī kali-gōmara bibasa bikala jāmati na ba'ī hai. 6.
 kali-karanī baraniyē kahām̐ laum̐, karata phirata binu ṭahala ṭa'ī hai.
 tāpara dām̐ta pīsi kara mīn̐jata, kō jānai cita kahā ṭha'ī hai. 7.
 tyōm̐ tyōm̐ nīca caṛhata sira ūpara, jyōm̐ jyōm̐ silabasa ḍhila da'ī hai.
 saruṣa baraji tarajiyē tarajanī, kumhilaihai kumharēkī ja'ī hai. 8.
 dījai dādi dēkhi nā tau bali, mahī mōda-maṅgala rita'ī hai.
 bharē bhāga anurāga lōga kahaim̐, rāma krpā-citavani cita'ī hai. 9.
 binatī suni sānanda hēri ham̐si, karunā-bāri bhūmi bhija'ī hai.

rāma-rāja bhayō kāja, saguna subha, rājā rāma jagata-bijaī hai. 10.
 samaratha barō, sujāna susāhaba, sukr̥ta-saina hārata jitaī hai.
 sujana subhāva sarāhata sādara, anāyāsa sāmśati bitaī hai. 11.
 uthapē thapana, ujāri basāvana, gaī bahōri birada sadaī hai.
 tulasī prabhu ārata-āratihara, abhayabām̐ha kēhi kēhi na daī hai. 12.

Verse no. 139—Oh Lord who is merciful and gracious towards the humble and the lowly (“dīnadayālu”—Sri Ram)! In the present times, the whole world is being burnt, i.e. is tormented, scorched and subjected to innumerable sufferings due to the vicious and cruel effects of misfortunes, bad times, sins, evils and poverty (**durita-dāridra-dukha**) that are further compounded by (**dunī**) the horrible effects of the three formidable Traitaps (Adhyatmik, Adhibhautik and Adidaivik) that spare no living being from their grip (**dusaha tihum̐ tāpa taī hai**)¹.

Oh Lord (**dēva**)! This tormented and afflicted person (here, it refers to Tulsidas himself) who is suffering himself and who feels pity and empathy for the likes of him who are suffering all around him, is pitiably crying out and wailing in despair at your door-step (i.e. in front of you and before your holy feet—“**duvāra pukārata ārata**”)—because he observes that all the people of this Kaliyug-affected world have gradually lost their joys, comforts and happiness, and are tormented by miseries and untold sufferings (**sabakī saba sukha hāni bhaī hai**)² (1).

[¹The 3 Traitaps: Refer verse no. 17, stanza no. 2 of this book Vinai Patrika.

²Tulsidas is concerned, like any true saint should be, about the sins and its negative influence on the people, about their doomed fate, about the ever increasing decadency and moral bankruptcy of the society, about the sufferings and miseries that the people undergo due to the dominance of sins and vices, and about the prospects of their deliverance from this quagmire and their ultimate salvation. He seeks Lord Sri Ram's intervention to protect the world from slipping further into the nightmarish whirlpool of sins, vices and evils. No one can help the creatures if the Lord doesn't step in out of his mercy and compassion for his subjects.]

The Vedas and experts assert (**bēda-budha-sam'mata**), and even the Lord (Sri Ram) has said himself (**prabhukē bacana**) that ‘The Brahmins are like my own image in this world (i.e. they are equivalent to and have the same exalted stature as the Lord himself)’ (**mama mūrati mahidēvamaī hai**). [This is because they are supposed to be learned, wise, enlightened, self-realised and the torch-bearers of the laws of Dharma, i.e. the laws of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct and thought.]

But oh Lord, look around and see what the ground reality is: it is such an irony that nowadays wisdom, intellect and discriminatory powers of those supposedly learned and wise Brahmins (**tinakī mati**) have been devoured (eclipsed, eliminated, obscured, negated, swallowed, and made null and void—“**līli laī hai**”) by negativity such as anger, indignation, attachments, infatuations, delusions, arrogance, ego, haughtiness, pride, vanity, greed, avarice and all other such negative traits; they have fallen from their path and have become victims of these vices (**risa-rāga-mōha-mada, lōbha lālaci**).³ (2).

[³To wit, the Brahmins who are supposed to be wise and learned and act as the torch-bearers of true knowledge and the principles of Dharma, who are supposed to act as teachers and guides for the rest of the world, have abandoned their natural good qualities and uprightness, and instead have become firmly entrenched in vices and

evils of all kinds, have developed bad habits and characters, and all possible manners of sinful and vile deeds and corrupt practices are the norm with them nowadays.

The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) ‘Riju’-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) ‘Tapa’-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) ‘Santosh’-be contented and satisfied, (4) ‘Kshamaa’-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) ‘Sheel’-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) ‘Jitendriya’-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) ‘Data’-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) ‘Gyani’-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) ‘Dayaalu’-to be merciful and compassionate. Refer: Shatpath Brahman.]

Similarly, the whole of the ruling class known as the ‘Kshatriya race’(rāja-samāja) has been overcome by millions of vices, perversions and misdemeanours (kusāja kōṭi). They are routinely acting against the established paths of righteousness, scrupulous behaviour and noble conduct, and indulging in cheating, robbery, treachery, deceit, crookedness, injustice, tyranny, cruelty, lachiviousness, lustfulness and unrighteousness, doing deeds that are immoral and abhorable by all counts, and find newer ways to implement their nefarious and crooked designs (kaṭu kalapita kaluṣa kucāla naī hai).

False doctrines, heterodoxy, heresy, distrust, misleading advices and nepotism (hētubāda) have searched out and completely destroyed even the remnants of (haṭhi hēri haī hai) the noble and worthy qualities of probity, propriety, politeness, faith (in God and the truth of scriptures), devotion, Dharma and the established traditions for which this race was so famed and respected (nīti, pratīti, prīti paramiti pati)⁴. (3)

[⁴To wit, the Kshatriya race has become completely corrupt, decadent, perverse, pervert, morally disgraced, unrighteous and unscrupulous. Instead of being the protector of the society, this race has become its tormentor and exploitor.]

The world has become completely blank (devoid; hollow) of the principles of Dharma that the people are expected to follow. [These principles of Dharma refer to the great and noble laws of rightful conduct, leading an ethical life, and faithfully doing one’s assigned duties in an auspicious and righteous manner.]

All regulations envisioned for the proper, smooth and cordial functioning of the society with respect to the four ‘Varnas’ (i.e. the four sections of the society such as the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras) and the four ‘Ashrams’ (i.e. the four divisions or phases in the lifespan of a person, such as Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Sanyas and Vanprastha) have vanished or obliterated completely (āśrama-barana-dharama-birahita jaga -- gaī hai)⁵.

The sanctity of the Vedas and established norms of the world have been completely lost. No one either respects traditions or civilised behaviour, nor pays attention to the edicts of the scriptures (lōka-bēda-marajāda gaī hai).

The subjects (the people of the world) have fallen from their path, becoming morally depraved, degraded and decadent (prajā patita), are engrossed in hearsay and heresy, false doctrines, pretensions, imposterings, deception, heterodoxy etc. (pākhaṇḍa), and are indulging in wickedness, sins, evils and vices of all kinds (pāparata).

Everyone follows his own path and is blowing one's own trumpet; all have become wayward, reckless and uncontrolled, and they do what suits them irrespective of the propriety, probity and correctness of their actions and deeds (*apanē apanē raṅga raī hai*) (4).

[⁵The 4 Varnas and the 4 Ashrams: See a detailed note marked # at the end of this verse.]

Peace, amity, goodwill, truth and good traditions have diminished (*sānti, satya, subha rīti gaī ghaṭi*), while false doctrines, heresy, apostasy and evil customs have increased and mushroomed everywhere (*barhī kurīti*).

Dishonesty, treachery, deceit, crookedness and falsehood have formed a tarnishing layer on all behaviours, characters and deeds of the people (as a result of which un-righteousness, perversity and evil are progressively on the rise) (*kapaṭa-kalaī hai*).

Saintly people are subjected to suffering (*sīdata sādhu*), and the virtues of saintliness and piety are a worried lot (*sādhutā sōcati*), while the vile and corrupt ones prosper and enjoy themselves (*khala bilasata*). The state of affairs is such that wickedness is rejoicing and getting enhanced exponentially (*hulasati khalaī hai*), whereas righteousness has gone into hiding (5).

Selflessness has been overcome by or transformed into selfishness (*paramāratha svāratha*). [For instance, people have become greedy and have started extorting and hoarding money in the name of imparting wisdom, knowledge, devotion, religion, Dharma, charity etc. Professional preachers have their eyes on the purse of those they preach, rather than on their spiritual welfare.]

The various sanctioned means and paths for attaining liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation are becoming ineffective and useless (because they are not properly done; they are not correctly advised and followed) (*sādhana bhayē aphala*).

The various 'Siddhis' (achievements of special spiritual powers and other successes in one's endeavours) have stopped being possible (*saphala nahim sid'dhi saī hai*).

The earth, which is like the all-wishfulling Kamdhenu cow (*kāmadhēnu dharanī*), has become so tormented and compelled by falling into the hands of the butcher-like Kaliyug that it is forced to obey its orders (*kali-gōmara bibasa bikala*) so much so that whatever is sown in it does not germinate, causing rampant hunger, poverty, natural calamities, famines and droughts (*jāmati na baī hai*) (6).

How far can one narrate the horrible deeds and their apocalyptic effects during this era known as 'Kaliyug' (*kali-karanī baraniyē kahām⁶ laum*)! It (the personified form of Kaliyug) roams about creating all types of nuisance and mischief (*karata phirata binu ṭahala ṭaī hai*). Even then it is not satisfied, but wrings its hands and grinds its teeth in a vengeful way (*tāpara dāmṭa pīsi kara mīṇjata*). No one knows what other mischief is there in his mind now (*kō jānai cita kahā ṭhaī hai*) (7).

Oh Lord! The more you continue to show your sense of mercy, tolerance and forgiveness on this wretched and wicked rascal (as this is your nature to pardon the

sinner and forgive him to a certain limit) (jyōm jyōm sīlabasa dhīla da'ī hai), the more this wicked fellow is exploiting this kind nature of yours to steadily become more and more aggressive, cruel, boisterous and belligerent (tyōm tyōm nīca caṛhata sira ūpara).

Oh Lord! Please admonish and restrain him (Kaliyug) by showing a bit of anger and wrath (sarūṣa baraji). As soon as he sees your raised finger in a gesture of stern warning to him (tarajiyē tarajanī), he would shrivel, i.e. shy away from carrying any further mischief for the fear of incurring your wrath like an unripe cucurbit that shrivels and dries up in the heat of the sun (kumhilaīhai kumhaṛēkī ja'ī hai) (8).

I beseech you to do justice and intervene in this matter, for otherwise this world would be robbed of all residual happiness, peace, auspiciousness and welfare that are still there in it (dījai dādi dēkhi nā tau bali, mahī mōda-maṅgala rita'ī hai).

Oh Lord, please do something so that the people feel blessed, happy and fortunate to have a Lord like you, for then they would affectionately and obligingly laud you and highly praise you by declaring that (bharē bhāga anurāga lōga kahaim) “Lord Sri Ram has seen us with his benevolent, merciful, kind, munificent and benediction filled eyes, and he has provided us with succour and solace from the horrors caused by our enemy, the Kaliyug” (rāma kṛpā-citavani cita'ī hai).

Oh Lord, do something to free the people from the torments of Kaliyug so that they feel grateful and obliged to you. (9).

Having heard my (Tulsidas') prayers, Lord Sri Ram felt glad, and looked at me cheerfully and affectionately he laughed a bit heartily (binatī suni sānanda hēri ham'si). He smiled and obligingly showered the rain of mercy and grace which drenched the whole earth (karunā-bāri bhūmi bhija'ī hai)⁶.

When Lord Ram had thus established his supremacy and reign (even during the evil era of Kaliyug) (rāma-rāja bhayō), every success was made possible, and whatever the creature wanted was provided to him for his welfare and happiness (bhayō kāja).

All good omens began to happen (saguna subha) because Lord Sri Ram has established himself as the conqueror of the world (in the sense that he has defeated the formidable enemy known as 'Kaliyug' which had been inflicting uncountable horrors upon the whole world, and like a conquering emperor the Lord has finally established his own reign marked by peace and happiness all around) (rājā rāma jagata-bija'ī hai)⁷ (10).

[⁶To wit, when Lord Ram heard my selfless prayers for the welfare of the suffering humanity, the Lord granted my prayer as he showered his grace upon the whole earth to make it peaceful and free it from all worries, miseries and agitations.

What Tulsidas actually intends to convey in this stanza is that if one prays to the Lord sincerely, and especially for a purpose that does not harm anybody else, the Lord is sure to listen and act on such prayer. Here, the 'Power of Prayer' is being highlighted.

⁷Tulsidas means that as soon as the laws of Dharma and righteousness were established after vanquishing the evil effects of Kaliyug that had earlier dominated his heart and mind like they dominate other corrupted creatures, he became peaceful and happiness came back to him. Lord Ram had literally vanquished Kaliyug who had a while earlier reigned supreme in the kingdom symbolised by Tulsidas' heart and mind

when the Lord heard of Tulsidas' plight. If the world and its living beings follow the example of Tulsidas by the way of the subtle advice this saint gives, it is sure that the world would be an ideal place to live. But the irony is that we do not follow the advice given by saints and holy men, but rather follow what our already corrupted intellect tells us to do.]

In the aforesaid manner, the Lord who is highly exalted, all-able and omnipotent (*samaratha barō*), who is a worthy Lord who embodies in his self all auspicious virtues and noble characters as well as wisdom, enlightenment and true knowledge (*sujāna susāhaba*), had prevented the army of righteousness and virtuous conduct from being defeated at the hands of the vile Kaliyug (*sukṛta-saina hārata jitaī hai*).

The devotees reverentially praise, honour and laud the majestic virtues and auspicious character of Lord from the inner core of their heart, honestly, sincerely and profusely (*sujana subhāva sarāhata sādara*), for they realise that the Lord has easily and effortlessly removed all the causes of torments, sufferings and tribulations from which they had been suffering prior to his intervention (*anāyāsa sāmśati bitaī hai*). [These devotees feel highly grateful and obliged to the Lord for restoring their peace and happiness for them (without any precondition or strings attached to such a benevolent gesture.) (11).

But why wouldn't you (Lord Sri Ram) have done so? [To wit, there is nothing to be astonished in Lord Ram removing the root of all miseries of his devotees, and granting them with happiness and joy.]

For it has always been your (Lord Ram's) reputation, your solemn vow and promise from time immemorial (*birada sadaī hai*), that you rehabilitate and reinstate those who have been uprooted (*uthapē thapana, ujāri basāvana*), as well as to restore things that had been wrongfully snatched away or got lost from their rightful owners (*gaī bahōri*). [For instance, you had given the lost kingdom of Kishkindha back to Sugriva, and Lanka's throne to Vibhishan. You had given the heaven back to the Gods who had earlier abandoned it due to Ravana's fear.]

Tulsidas says, 'Who has not been granted freedom from torments, tribulations, miseries and sorrows etc. once he has prayed to Lord Ram and sought his blessings, for the Lord is famed for granting such boons and removing these sufferings (*tulasī prabhu ārata-āratihara*).

Say, who has not been granted sure fearlessness, protection, succour and solace at the hands of Lord Ram (*abhayabāmha kēhi kēhi na daī hai*)⁷?

[⁷To wit, the Lord had removed the sufferings of the downtrodden, the distressed, the humble, the sorrowful, the miserable and the lowly ones. Who is there whom the Lord has not been given the reassurance of fearlessness and protection of his strong arms.

Everyone, without exception, who sought help from the Lord to overcome his miseries was duly welcomed and obliged by the Lord who went out of his way to please his devotees. Say, where else would one find a Lord more compassionate and gracious than Lord Ram? Lord Ram has removed the miseries and fears of all, and promised to do so even in the future.] (12).

[Note—The menace caused by Kaliyug and the horrors it creates have been described by Tulsidas elsewhere also, such as in his epic book "Ram Charit Manas", Uttar

Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 97—to Doha no. 104 ka; and in “Kavitawali”, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 83-88.

Refer also to verse nos. 173, 184, 194 (stanza 3), and 195 (stanza 2) of this book *Vinai Patrika* in this context of the moral and mental turpitudes, the degradations, perversities, depravations, transgressions of all dimensions and denominations that are so characteristic of Kaliyug, and the negation and decimation of all good and righteous virtues during this era.

The 4 Varnas—The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes or segments or divisions by ancient sages for the sake of convenience and proper regulation of the huge society, for the purpose of its regulation and ease of its administration. These four divisions are called ‘Varnas’, and they are the following—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. Members of each division have their role in society clearly marked and are expected to do their duties faithfully and diligently. Ancient sages and seers had envisioned this heirarchical system so that the society functions smoothly and each member knows what he or she is expected to do. This helps in proper administration and regulation of the society, proper maintenance of its law and order, as well as in fixing accountability.

It helped in judicious distribution of work to be done, to regulate the functioning of the society by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. This system helped in judicious regulation of the working of the society as a whole because each individual member of any given Varna knew what is expected of him. It helped in proper distribution of work that had to be done for day-to-day survival, without any duplicity and tussle.

But these four divisions were not water-tight compartments, and since their primary aim was maintenance and proper functioning of the society, these roles smoothly merged into one another at their meeting points.

For instance, though ‘Brahmins’ were primarily the elderly class well versed in the scriptures and assigned the job of acting as teachers, guides, advisors and preceptors, they was no bar for them to act as regents and warriors to protect others should the situation so demand.

The ‘Kshatriya’ was primarily responsible for giving protection to the society so that the rest of its members can carry out their duties without fear.

The society had to be fed and provided with material comfort and needs of daily life. This was the duty of the ‘Vaishya’ who was essentially of the trading community generating wealth and providing for the necessities of life.

But there should be someone who will attend to manual labour and serve the society so that its other members are freed from the grind of humdrum affairs of life to carry out their own duties. These were the ‘Sudras’. They did manual work which we ordinarily call a servant’s job. All types of tradesmen, craftsmen, smiths etc, such as washermen, carpenters, blacksmiths, farmers, herdsman, boatmen, and countless other vocations and professions that made the society’s wheel running and well-oiled were classified as ‘Sudra’. The scriptures call them the ‘foot of the man’ in the sense that just as a man can’t stand up to do anything or go anywhere without his legs, the society won’t be able to stand up and function without the help of Sudras. It is obvious that the term ‘Sudra’ was not meant to demean or degrade any member of the society at large, for in fact they formed the base or foundation upon which the society stood and functioned without having to worry about physical support by way of

manial labour that can help the Brahmin, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya perform their duties properly.

As will be clearly observed by the above reading that our ancient forefathers and patriarchs had been wise and prudent in establishing this four segment heirarchical system in society. Otherwise, there is utter chaos and anarchy in society due to dominance of evil influences of Kaliyug. It is just like misgovernance in a country when the administrative machinery collapses and there is complete mayhem everywhere.

As stated above, these four sections are—(a) Brahmins*—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras—the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

In ancient Indian tradition, the kings and the ruling class belonged to the caste called 'Kshatriya', and their main job/vocation was giving protection and providing sustenance to their subjects belonging to the other three castes. To do this, they had to wage wars—some in defense and some in aggression because they wanted to expand their area of influence. But wars nevertheless involved bloodshed which any peace loving soul of Satwic tendency would abhor. So a king could be Satwic by temperament but Rajsic by occupation and compulsion. Those who were Satwic were prescribed the non-violent method of worship and sacrifices to Goddess Durga during peace times as described in *Devipurana Mahabhagwat*, Canto 46, verse nos. 15-17½, while those of Rajsic bearings were to do worship requiring animal sacrifices as described in verse nos. 17-21, especially in preparation for and during wars. Even today it is observed that the army is non-vegetarian in its food habits because the solders cannot kill their enemies in battle—as is required of them because of their vocation as a soldier—if they avoid killing and instead show mercy and compassion on their enemies. Perhaps this is the reason why meat-eating is never looked down in army; in fact, it is a normal diet amongst the Kshatriya class. Though mercy and compassion are indeed supremely good qualities, they are not meant for the battlefield unless the enemy surrenders and relents. The world would have been a 'heaven-on-earth' if this quality prevailed in the battlefield! However, since Sri Ram was at war with a vicious, unforgiving, cruel and formidable enemy (Ravana), and a lot was at stake (e.g. the very existence of the world and its peace), and it was a no-holds-barred, fierce and uncompromising war, the second category of worship—animal sacrifice symbolising the death of the enemy—was prescribed for him by the Goddess. And this was precisely what Brahma and other Gods did as is evident in verse nos. 33.

Yajur Veda 31st Chapter, 11th Mantra says that Brahmins are the mouth of society, the Kshatriyas are its arms, Vaishyas are its stomach or abdomen, and Shudras are its legs. The body is regarded as a symbol of the society. As is obvious in this analogy, all these four units of the body must function properly and in close cooperation with each other in order that the body can survive and live comfortably and carry on with its assigned duties in an orderly fashion. The mouth is important because it is the medium by which the body takes food and speaks; the arms procure

food and gives protection to the body against enemies; the stomach digests food and supplies the whole body with the energy needed by it; the abdomen holds all the internal organs; and the legs carry the body wherever it wants to go such as the place where food is available. Since food is the basis necessity of life, this instance is cited here. And the logic can be extended to everything else. Each component of the society must work properly in order that the whole society survives; each component is as vital as the other; each has its own importance in the bigger picture.

As time passed, by and by, the Kshatriya class had become very haughty and arrogant because all physical powers and military strength were vested in it. The king's treasury was supposed to be a common pool where the society could keep its wealth that it generates by toil, and the king was merely its custodian. But as time passed, the kings began to treat this treasury as their personal property, and while they rolled in luxury the peasant class, the working class that toiled day in and day out to generate this wealth hadn't a square meal to dump in their empty tummies and a roof to cover them against the vagaries of cruel Nature. Though the powers and wealth of the Kshatriya class were meant for the welfare of the society as a whole, more often than not these elements went to the head of kings, making them arrogant, haughty, exploitative and insensitive towards others.

Reasons for classification—The *Niralambo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 10 states the reason for the classification of the society in four classes as follows—"The skin, blood, flesh, bones and the Atma/soul have no caste, creed, colour or race. These have been conceived as a practical measure to regulate and control our day to day behaviours and interactions with each other (10).

The four Ashrams—The life of a (Hindu) man was divided into four quarters by ancient sages, forefathers and patriarchs of the society. These four quarters are the following—Brahmcharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyas. Each quarter was of approximately 20-25 years.

The first quarter is when a man was supposed to study and learn the skills that are needed for the affairs of an adult life. This was 'Brahmcharya Ashram'. The word literally means a celibate and one who exercises self-restraint. This was essential for study and inculcating skills which require focus of mind and heart. During this time, the man is young and is supposed to observe austerities while he studies and acquires knowledge to equip him to face the world when he grows up.

The second quarter is 'Grihastha Ashram'. It is when the student enters the household phase of life. He marries, raises a family and carries on with his profession or vocation to increase wealth and progeny.

When a person becomes ripe in age, his working capacity decreases and he must prepare to pass on the baton to the next generation, to his heirs when they are ready to step in his shoes, and when he has done his bit for society. This is the 'Vanaprastha Ashram'—the third phase of life when a person prepares to hand the responsibilities of his worldly affairs to his heirs and mentally prepares himself to lead a calm and detached life so that he can get ready for the final phase of old age.

Though it literally means 'heading for the forest', but not necessarily it be so. Its primary function is to withdraw from playing an active role in the affairs of the world and give one's mind and body rest and peace after the toil of the previous years. In ancient times though it actually meant going to the forest and spending time in a serene place in some hermitage. But in modern times it is neither feasible nor advisable. The best avenue is to withdraw from active role and serve more as an advisor and guide for the next generation in a dispassionate manner.

The final and fourth quarter is called ‘Sanyas Ashram’ which clearly means absolute withdrawal from the world and its affairs. This is the time when the man is of about say 70 or more years of age. So he needs complete peace and should prepare to make an exit from the world without a fuss. He is expected to create such a situation that no one misses or wails for him nor anything suffers due to his absence. Thus, he dies peacefully and self-contentedly.

During the ‘Sanyas Ashram’ a person is expected to completely renounce the world and its entanglements, and instead spend the remaining part of his life in spiritual pursuit and searching ways for his spiritual liberation and deliverance.

Now, let us study them in more detail.

(a) Brahmacharya¹—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style of a boarding school. (b) Grihasta—when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihasta Ashram which is a householder’s life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life alongside the dealings with this deceptive world with all its accompanying horrifying problems. (c) Vanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting-off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and meditation, living a life of total renunciation, and begging for food for survival while single mindedly endeavouring for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.

In brief, the ‘Brahmacharis’ are celibates students who must exercise the greatest self-restraint in order to concentrate their energy on their studies. It is the first phase of life. The ‘Grihasta’ is the householder. After study, the student marries to raise a family and contribute to the continuation of the cycle of creation. This marks the second phase of life. The ‘Vaan-prastha’ is a person who hands over the responsibilities of worldly affairs to his heir and prepares to lead a retired life, literally though the word means to ‘retire to the forest’. This is the third phase of life. And finally, the ‘Sanyasi’ is a person who has renounced the world and spends his time in meditation and contemplation. This is the fourth and the final phase of life.

The term “Brahmcharaya”—or one who practices the principles of life in accordance to the eclectic philosophy of Brahm-realisation, is very much misunderstood and misquoted. It primarily refers to that part of life when a practitioner exercises exemplary self-control—or “continence”—over his gross organs of the body so that all his energy and attention can be focused on higher goals of life—such as spiritual upliftment and ‘self’ as well as ‘Brahm’ realisation. Now, if one allows oneself to indulge in gratifying the urges of the body, a lot of his time and

energy would be spent on this activity, leaving him exhausted and weary to the extent that he would have little stamina or will left to pursue higher goals of life.

Worldly indulgences can never give sustainable peace, happiness and bliss; it's like seeking water in a desert mirage. On the other hand, self-restraint that prevents the creature from falling into this trap is 'Brahmacharya'—i.e. practicing the principles of life as practiced by acclaimed ascetics.

Brahmacharya is to live a life that contributes to Brahman-realisation; it is to practice the principles that enable a person to attain success in his pursuit of knowledge of the higher goals of life, to become wise and learned.

Usually the term applies to the first phase of a person's life, the 1st quarter of his life, when he is supposed to spend time studying and imbibing knowledge that would prepare him to face life and the tumble and turmoil of the world. A student who concentrates his mind on his studies will obviously do well and shine in his chosen field as compared to one who spends his time enjoying and fooling around.

Therefore, a person who practices the principles of Brahmacharya throughout his life becomes empowered with special powers and energy that help him to achieve stupendous feats which his peers who fritter away their internal energy in worldly pursuit and self-indulgence can't hope to achieve.

Brahmacharya is not merely 'celibacy' or control over the sexual urges; it is a comprehensive term encompassing "total self-control" over the tendencies of the gross body consisting of the sense organs of action and perception, as well as the subtle aspects of the body consisting of the mind and heart.

These four Ashrams, their characteristic features and virtues are described in detail in an Upanishad called *Ashramo-panishad* belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition. Refer also to *Kathrudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 3 in the context of one taking the vows of Sanyas, the renunciate way of life which is the fourth and the last phase in the life of a man which prepares him for his final liberation and deliverance from this world.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 6 says that true Moksha or Mukti for the creature is obtained when he rises above the limitations of these four Ashrams.]

The fate of those who have turned away from the Lord

(140)

ते नर नरकरूप जीवत जग भव-भंजन-पद-बिमुख अभागी ।
 निसिबासर रुचिपाप असुचिमन, खलमति-मलिन, निगमपथ-त्यागी ।।1।।
 नहिं सतसंग, भजन नहिं हरिको, स्रवन न राम-कथा-अनुरागी ।
 सुत-बित-दार-भवन-ममता-निसि सोवत अति, न कबहुँ मति जागी ।।2।।
 तुलसिदास हरिनाम-सुधा तजि, सठ हठि पियत बिषय-बिष माँगी ।
 सूकर-स्वान-सृगाल-सरिस जन, जनमत जगत जननि-दुख लागी ।।3।।

(140)

tē nara narakarūpa jīvata jaga bhava-bhanjāna-pada-bimukha abhāgī.
 nisibāsara rucipāpa asucimana, khalamati-malina, nigamapatha-tyāgī. 1.
 nahim satasaṅga, bhajana nahim harikō, sravana na rāma-kathā-anurāgī.
 suta-bitā-dāra-bhavana-mamatā-nisi sōvata ati, na kabahum̐ mati jāgī. 2.
 tulasidāsa harināma-sudhā taji, saṭha haṭhi piyata biṣaya-biṣa mām̐gī.
 sūkara-svāna-srgāla-sarisa jana, janamata jagata janani-dukha lāgī. 3.

Verse no. 140—Those people (tē nara) are most unfortunate (abhāgī) who are opposed to (i.e. who do not have devotion or reverence for) the holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram) which destroy the bondage that ties a creature to this mortal world of transmigration, a world that is like a vast ocean consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death known as “Bhava” (bhava-bhanjāna-pada-bimukha), for they live a harrowing life in this world which becomes a living hell for them, a world that is marked by all sorts of miseries and sufferings that are typically associated with hell (narakarūpa jīvata jaga)¹.

They are always inclined to commit sins and vices day and night (nisibāsara rucipāpa). Their mind always remain impure, pervert, perverse, corrupt and depraved (asucimana). The intellect of those wicked ones remain dark, tainted or maligned with corruption, depravation, decadency, turpitude and perversity (khalamati-malina), and they are deemed to have abandoned the sanctioned path of propriety, probity, righteousness and auspiciousness as prescribed by the Vedas (nigamapatha-tyāgī).

[¹To wit, all those people who have no faith and devotion for the Lord God live a life of perpetual sufferings and miseries in this world. For them, their life is like hell. This is in sharp contrast with devotees of the Lord who live a life of happiness and joy, free from all worries and torments, because they have mental peace as they know that they have the support of the Lord who would take care of their needs and welfare. Besides this, devotees of the Lord do not get attracted and attached to the false charms of the physical world of sense objects, and they develop some sort of spiritual wisdom and a sense of dispassion and renunciation towards the world, no matter how small and imperceptible they are, as a result of which they are not much moved or afflicted by the turmoil that surrounds them. Such devotees find peace within themselves as they enjoy the image of their revered Lord in the firmament of their inner-self; they do not seek peace in the material world outside.

A person who does not believe in the Lord God finds himself lonely and abandoned in this world when the time turns bad for him. He finds no one who would listen to his woes and complaints; no one seems to worry and be concerned with his plight. When the time was good he was surrounded by obliging friends like they were locusts over a ripe green harvest, but no one recognises him when he is in dire straits. On the other hand, a devotee has his loved Lord God always by his side like a true and faithful friend, ever ready to listen to his pains and provide him with the much needed psychological support a person so much needs in the times of his distress.] (1).

Such a person (who does not have devotion and faith in the Lord, and who wishes to remain indulgent in the world and its false relationships and charms) would not like to have any communion or any worthwhile contact with saints and pious people (nahim satasaṅga), nor does he worship and revere the Lord God and have any faith and respect for him (bhajana nahim harikō), so much so that they have no interest in hearing the narration of the holy stories of the Lord and his glories which become

unbearable for their ears (“*śravaṇa na rāma-kathā-anurāgi*”—i.e. these divine stories of the Lord appear to be unpleasant for their ears, and they shun hearing them)².

They are soundly asleep (*nisi sōvata ati*) in the symbolic night of infatuations, attachments and allurements (*mamatā*) represented by their selfish and vested interests associated with the world and its numerous relationships such as that with a son, wealth, wife and homestead etc. (*suta-bitā-dāra-bhavana*).

Their intellect-wisdom never wakes up from this sleep (of ‘my’ and ‘me’) (*na kabahum̐ mati jāgi*)³.

[²This is also why they shun the company of saints—because spiritual matters bore them, and worldly matters enthuse them! In the company of saints they would have to hear the glories of the Lord God being narrated and discussed, instead of worldly matters being the subject of talk every time of the day which is something they like to hear and find pleasure in. Besides this, the company of saints would bring into sharp focus the shortcomings and faults of their own lives, and being full of ego, vanity and pride they would never allow themselves to believe that they have so many dark traits and negativities within themselves, because they have brainwashed their mind to self-believe that they are better educated, more wise and more successful in this life as compared to these renunciate fakirs who have nothing to own for themselves in this world in the form of material things, and therefore they pretend to have renounced the world! So such foolish people abhor the company of saints altogether; they feel shy and guilty in their presence, and avoid to be face to face with them. To hide their guilt and shame, to conceal their inner sense of unease and restlessness, they try to be boastful of their material success in this world when they argue against saints who preach renunciation and devotion for Lord God as if they are preaching one to run away from his responsibility. What the saints really mean is that one should do his duties willingly and with due diligence, but offer all efforts to the Lord, and not be unduly attached with anything in this gross world because nothing in this world would give internal peace and happiness as much as having love and devotion for the Lord God and experiencing his presence within one’s inner-self.

³They forget that this world and its inhabitants for whom they do and suffer so much would pay no heed to them if their self-interests are not met. All relationships of the world tend to milk him for their own comfort, pleasure, facilitations, enhancements and good, without actually bothering for the concerned person’s personal comfort, pleasures, good, peace and happiness. If this person fails to live up to the expectations that these worldly relations such as a wife and a son have from him that he would provide them with wealth and home, then no one would care for this unfortunate person; his mere presence would be an eyesore for them.

There is another interpretation for this stanza. Those people who have no wisdom and enlightenment do not realise that this world and everything in it, including their own body, are perishable and the cause of miseries and pains in this life in the long run. Nothing is permanent, for one day or the other, this wife, this son, this wealth and home, for which a person had struggled so hard and created ill-will with others day and night, would either leave him or he would have to leave them. For instance, there is no guarantee that the wife and the son would live and be obedient and faithful to him always till he lives, nor is there any certainty that the wealth and home which he calls his would not be of someone else when the time turns unfavourable for him. Again, when he dies, everything would be left behind; he would have to forcefully leave them. His attachments with them would give him misery and grief in all circumstances, if they happen to leave him or become

unfaithful to him prematurely, or he has to abandon them at the time of his death. So, where is there peace and happiness in this scenario of uncertainty and constant alarm?

Further, all these worldly relationships and things concerning them, all exhibitions of friendship and kinship, all interactions and transactions of the world are limited to the gross body of the person concerned, and not to his ‘true self’ which is the pure conscious Atma or the Soul or the Spirit. These being the case, is it not stupidity and absurd to get worked up and restless about things that do not directly concerns one’s own self and interest?

The real interest of a person is in finding abiding peace and happiness for himself which does not come from any of these superficial relationships with the gross world and its entities, but in establishing a contact with the pure consciousness that resides within one’s own self as his Atma. This Atma is an image of the Supreme Atma known as the ‘Parmatma’ or the Lord God who is represented by Lord Ram in this visible world close at hand, because the Parmatma whom Lord Ram represented is an invisible and cosmic Being who is beyond the reach of the common man.] (2).

Oh Tulsidas (tulasidāsa)! Those stupid, wretched and wicked rascals (saṭha) who abandon the nectar-like name of Sri Hari (Lord Ram) (harināma-sudhā taji), and instead demand and willingly drink (haṭhi piyata) the poison represented by infatuations and lust for the objects and pleasures arising out of this gross, mundane and perishable world (such as longing for the son, wife, wealth, home etc. as cited herein above) (biṣaya-biṣa māmgi)—verily indeed, such unfortunate persons are born in this mundane world like pigs, dogs and jackals (sūkara-svāna-sṛgāla-sarisa jana) only to inflict (or be a cause of) pain and sorrows to their mothers (janamata jagata janani-dukha lāgi)⁴. [To wit, if a person does not have devotion and affection for the Lord God, then his birth in this world is no better than that of an animal.]

[⁴Tulsidas says that if a person is foolish enough to be engrossed in the affairs of the gross world and become infatuated with worldly relationships, if he seems to be happy and contented by gratifying the urges of his sense organs and find comfort in such activities, then surely such a ill-witted man is doomed to live a life that is equivalent to that of a pig’s, a dog’s and a jackal’s. These animals are regarded as lowly and are generally held with contempt by the civil society. No one would like to keep company with a filthy pig, a stray and famished dog, or a vile and stinking jackal. These lowly creatures spend their entire lives in a lowly condition, full of greed which is never satisfied, living only to feed their bodies and reproduce, roaming from place to place and being unwelcome wherever they go. They take birth, spend their time in gratifying the natural instincts of their bodies, and die unsung and uncared for. While they are alive they feed their bodies with the carcasses of other animals, and when they die vultures and even their own kin feed on their dead bodies. They honour no sustainable relationships even among their own race, and would pick up a bloody fight for morsels of food, so selfish they are.

So Tulsidas says that a person who does not have devotion and faith in the Lord God, who never bothers about his spiritual future and well-being, who lives a life of self-gratification and indulgences in the sense objects of the world and their comforts and pleasures, who treats his body and its pleasures as the sole objective of his life, and the external world as the only existence for him, such persons are no better than pigs, dogs and jackals. Like a fattened pig who eats and lives to produce meat for others who kill it to satisfy their own appetite, like the dog who keeps wagging his tail at the master’s foot so that he gets his crumbs of food, or otherwise he would have to roam from door to door, or one garbage bin to another to feed his

stomach, and the cunning jackal who stealthily steals the prey hunted by the lion, a foolish man spends his life feeding his stomach and allowing himself to be preyed upon by others whom he erroneously thinks to be his own wife, son, and kith and kin. Of course they are, but only till the time he meets their demands, for once he says 'no', they start neglecting him and insulting him.] (3).

Prayer offered to Lord Śrī Rāma

(141)

रामचंद्र! रघुनायक! तुमसों हों बिनती केहि भाँति करौं ।
 अघ अनेक अवलोकि आपने, अनघ नाम अनुमानि डरौं ॥1॥
 पर-दुख दुखी सुखी पर-सुख ते, संत-सील नहिं हृदय धरौं ।
 देखि आनकी बिपति परम सुख, सुनि संपति बिनु आगि जरौं ॥2॥
 भगति-बिराग-ग्यान साधन कहि बहु बिधि डहकत लोग फिरौं ।
 सिव-सरबस सुखधाम नाम तव, बेंचि नरकप्रद उदर भरौं ॥3॥
 जानत हों निज पाप जलधि जिय, जल-सीकर सम सुनत लरौं ।
 रज-सम पर-अवगुन सुमेरु करि, गुन गिरि-सम रजतें निदरौं ॥4॥
 नाना बेष बनाय दिवस-निसि, पर-बित जेहि तेहि जुगुति हरौं ।
 एकौ पल न कबहुँ अलोल चित हित दै पद-सरोज सुमिरौं ॥5॥
 जो आचरन बिचारहु मेरो, कलप कोटि लागि औटि मरौं ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु कृपा-बिलोकनि, गोपद-ज्यों भवसिंधु तरौं ॥6॥

(141)

rāmacandra! raghunāyaka! tumasōm hauṁ binatī kēhi bhāmṭi karaum.
 agha anēka avalōki āpanē, anagha nāma anumāni ḍarauṁ. 1.
 para-dukha dukhī sukhī para-sukha tē, santa-sīla nahim hṛdaya dharaum.
 dēkhi ānakī bipati parama sukha, suni sampati binu āgi jaraum. 2.
 bhagati-birāga-gyāna sādhanā kahi bahu bidhi ḍahakata lōga phiraum.
 siva-sarabasa sukhadhāma nāma tava, bēnci narakaprada udara bharaum. 3.
 jānata hauṁ nija pāpa jaladhi jiya, jala-sīkara sama sunata laraum.
 raja-sama para-avaguna sumēru kari, guna giri-sama rajatēm nidarauṁ. 4.
 nānā bēṣa banāya divasa-nisi, para-bita jēhi tēhi juguti haraum.
 ēkau pala na kabahum' alōla cita hita dai pada-sarōja sumiraum. 5.
 jō ācarana bicārahu mērō, kalapa kōṭi lagi auṭi maraum.
 tulasidāsa prabhu kṛpā-bilōkani, gōpada-jyōm bhavasindhu taraum. 6.

Verse no. 141—# Oh Lord Sri Ram who is as soothing, cool and beauteous as the full Moon (rāmacandra), and who is the most exalted member in the race descending from king Raghu of Ayodhya (raghunāyaka)! How can I pray to you (tumasōm hauṁ binatī kēhi bhāmṭi karaum)?

Looking at my numerous sins, vices, evils and faults (agha anēka avalōki āpanē), and thinking of your sinless, faultless, flawless and pure and holy name

(anagha nāma), I am too hesitant and feel shy and affright to do so (i.e. to pray to you) (anumāni ḍaraum).

[To wit, I am so sinful and fallen that I feel too guilty and ashamed to raise my head and face you so that I can pray to you. I feel I am not worthy to pray to you.

Refer also to stanza no. 1 of verse nos. 142 and 148.] (1).

The saints have a natural disposition and habit of feeling sad at the sorrows of others, and feeling happy at their joys (para-dukha dukhī sukhī para-sukha tē)—I have never had this saintly sentiment in my heart; I have never inculcated this grand virtue so characteristic of saints in myself (santa-sīla nahim hr̥daya dharaum).

On the contrary, I feel extremely glad on seeing the troubles, tribulations, sufferings and miseries of others (dēkhi ānakī bipati parama sukha), and burn myself without an actual fire by having jealousy when I hear about their wealth, prosperity and general well-being (sunī sampati binu āgi jaraum).

[This also makes me guilty before you. Had I been a saintly man, I would have boldly come to you to plead my case. But I am so un-saintly and full of evil traits that I somehow feel affright to stand before your majesty for fear of being caught and punished, or at least being publicly admonished and censured.] (2).

Boastfully preaching and explaining in different ways the many virtues of renunciation, detachment, devotion, wisdom and enlightenment to others (bhagati-birāga-gyāna sādhanā kahi bahu bidhi), I roam about actually deceiving them (because I neither know the meaning of these virtues myself nor practise them) (ḍahakata lōga phiraum).

I fill my hell-pit like stomach by selling or encasing your holy name (bēñci narakaprada udara bharaum)¹ which is all-in-all and the best possession (i.e. every conceivable thing of any worth in this creation) for Lord Shiva (siva-sarabasa)², for this holy name of yours is an abode or treasury of all bliss and beatitude in this world (sukhadhāma nāma tava).

This surely is such an abhorable act on my part which is surely leading me to hell (narakaprada)!

[¹In this context, refer to verse nos. 41, 76, 109, 171 of this book Vinai Patrika.

²Lord Shiva is the most enlightened amongst the Gods and an ardent devotee of Lord Ram, not only repeating the Lord's holy name day and night but also using this spiritual panacea for granting liberation and deliverance to a dying man by uttering Lord Ram's holy name in the dying person's ears.

Tulsidas here alludes to professional preachers and pseudo saints who go around in saintly garb uttering the holy name of Lord Ram just to make the world believe that they are saints and holy men, whereas their real intention is to collect wealth, followership and fame.] (3).

I know in my heart that my sins and vices, my shortcomings and faults are so countless that they are like a fathomless and measureless ocean (jānata haum nija pāpa jaladhi jiya), but when I hear from the mouth of others that I have even a drop of sin, I fly in to a rage, pretending that they are making false allegations against me out of jealousy and with the intention of maligning my reputation (though internally I realise they are speaking the truth) (jala-sikara sama sunata laraum).

On the other hand, I treat the smallest of vices, the minutest of shortcomings and faults that others might have as being huge and prominent as a mountain known as Sumeru (the heavenly mountain where the gods have their abode) (**raja-sama para-avaguna sumēru kari**), while treating their greatest and grandest of virtues and qualities that might be as huge as a mountain itself as being small and inconsequential as a particle of dust (**guna giri-sama rajatēm nidaraum**)².

[²To wit, when I hear someone pointing out my own shortcomings and faults to me even if it is done with a good intention to help me know about them and make efforts to remove them, I fly into a rage because I think that the person is criticising me to deride, demean and humiliate me in public. My ego is hurt, so I retort by treating that person's immensely good qualities as being a worthless particle of dust, and express my indignation by saying so boisterously so that the other well-meaning person keeps his mouth shut and does not expose my own shortcomings.

Tulsidas means that it is natural for a man to hear others call him a highly righteous and noble person, while he fishes out the minutest faults in them and blows them out of proportion, making the small faults of others into a mountain.

It is to be noted here that instead of being straight-forward about the deceptive means adopted by false saints and inviting their scorn and wrath, Tulsidas has said everything in a round about way as if he was both the culprit and the guilty as well as an upright and judicious judge. His main aim is to warn and alert the world against sinful persons who may lead others astray.

This indirect method of accusing himself of all the vices and evils that Tulsidas tries to bring out in the open in others helps him to prevent the real culprits and pervert persons from accusing him of exposing their sinister character and raising a finger at them to warn the innocent world not to fall prey to their game-plan. Such sinful persons now cannot accuse him of being pretentious and self-righteous, acting like a holy cow and pretending to be holier than thou while pricking holes in the character of others, and telling him to shut up and mind his own business instead of speaking the truth about them. See note # at the end of this verse also.] (4).

Adopting various deceptive tactics, donning many colourful attires, exhibiting many forms and sporting external paraphernalia (**nānā bēṣa banāya divasa-nisi**), I steal the wealth of others by hook or by crook day and night (**para-bita jēhi tēhi juguti haraum**). [To wit, I pretend to be a saintly and holy man and adopt all possible means to defraud others, rob them of their money, but I have no regrets about it.]

I never remember your (Lord Ram's) lotus-like holy feet even for a moment with a stable mind and with consistency (though I loudly preach others to have devotion in the feet of the Lord) (**ēkau pala na kabahum' alōla cita hita dai pada-sarōja sumiraum**). [To wit, I don't practice what I preach!] (5).

Oh Lord, if you pay attention to my (corrupt, sinful, perverse, decadent and evil) deeds and ways (**jō ācarana bicārahu mērō**), then I will have to suffer death-by-boiling in this world-like cauldron for millions of Kalpas (i.e. for all times to come and for countless generations) (**kalapa kōṭi lagi auṭi maraum**)! [To wit, I shall never be liberated from the vicious cycle of birth and death, and I will continue to suffer interminably.]

But oh Lord, if you show mercy, grace, benevolence and kindness upon this Tulsidas (**tulasidāsa prabhu kṛpā-bilōkani**), then I shall cross this ocean-like mundane world as if it was a body of water as tiny as a cow's hooves (**gōpada-jyōm**

bhavasindhu taraum). [To wit, if the Lord is kind upon the creature who prays to the Lord with a sincere heart for forgiveness, then it is easy for the creature to find liberation and deliverance from the sufferings of this mundane world of transmigration as easily as one steps across a small puddle of dirty water.] (6).

[#Note—In this verse, Tulsidas has indirectly chided those people who pretend to be saintly and holy men but they only cheat others for their vested self interest, for they neither are saintly nor have anything to do with the Lord God of whom they preach so vociferously. They are using the Lord's holy name to fill their stomachs and meet their desire for obtaining material wealth, without understanding that they are opening the gate of hell for themselves.

A similar prayer is in the next verse no. 142.]

Prayer offered to Lord Śrī Rāma

(142)

सकुचत हौं अति राम कृपानिधि! क्यों करि बिनय सुनावौं ।
 सकल धरम बिपरीत करत, केहि भौंति नाथ! मन भावौं ॥1॥
 जानत हौं हरि रूप चराचर, मैं हठि नयन न लावौं ।
 अंजन-केस-सिखा जुवती, तहँ लोचन-सलभ पठावौं ॥2॥
 श्रवननि को फल कथा तुम्हारी, यह समुझौं, समुझावौं ।
 तिन्ह श्रवननि परदोष निरंतर सुनि सुनि भरि भरि तावौं ॥3॥
 जेहि रसना गुन गाइ तिहारे, बिनु प्रयास सुख पावौं ।
 तेहि मुख पर-अपवाद भेक ज्यों रटि-रटि जनम नसावौं ॥4॥
 'करहु हृदय अति बिमल बसहिं हरि', कहि कहि सबहिं सिखावौं ।
 हौं निज उर अभिमान-मोह-मद खल-मंडली बसावौं ॥5॥
 जो तनु धरि हरिपद साधहिं जन, सो बिनु काज गँवावौं ।
 हाटक-घट भरि धर्यो सुधा गृह, तजि नभ कूप खनावौं ॥6॥
 मन-क्रम-बचन लाइ कीन्हे अघ, ते करि जतन दुरावौं ।
 पर-प्रेरित इरषा बस कबहुँक किय कछु सुभ, सो जनावौं ॥7॥
 बिप्र-द्रोह जनु बाँट पश्यो, हठि सबसों बैर बढ़ावौं ।
 ताहूपर निज मति-बिलास सब संतन माँझ गनावौं ॥8॥
 निगम सेस सारद निहोरि जो अपने दोष कहावौं ।
 तौ न सिराहिं कलप सत लागि प्रभु, कहा एक मुख गावौं ॥9॥
 जो करनी आपनी बिचारौं, तौ कि सरन हौं आवौं ।
 मृदुल सुभाउ सील रघुपतिको, सो बल मनहिं दिखावौं ॥10॥
 तुलसिदास प्रभु सो गुन नहिं, जेहि सपनेहुँ तुमहिं रिझावौं ।
 नाथ-कृपा भवसिंधु धेनुपद सम जो जानि सिरावौं ॥11॥

(142)

sakucata haurṁ ati rāma kṛpānidhi! kyōṁ kari binaya sunāvaum.
 sakala dharama biparīta karata, kēhi bhāmṁti nātha! mana bhāvaum. 1.
 jānata haurṁ hari rūpa carācara, mairṁ haṭhi nayana na lāvaum.

an̄jana-kēsa-sikhā juvatī, taham̄ lōcana-salabha paṭhāvaur̄m. 2.
 śravanani kō phala kathā tumhārī, yaha samujhaur̄m, samujhāvaur̄m.
 tinha śravanani paradōṣa nirantara suni suni bhari bhari tāvaur̄m. 3.
 jēhi rasanā guna gā'i tihārē, binu prayāsa sukha pāvaur̄m.
 tēhi mukha para-apavāda bhēka jyōm̄ raṭi-raṭi janama nasāvaur̄m. 4.
 'karahu hṛdaya ati bimala basahim̄ hari', kahi kahi sabahim̄ sikhāvaur̄m.
 haur̄m nija ura abhimāna-mōha-mada khala-maṇḍalī basāvaur̄m. 5.
 jō tanu dhari haripada sādham̄ jana, sō binu kāja gam̄vāvaur̄m.
 hāṭaka-ghaṭa bhari dharyō sudhā gr̄ha, taji nabha kūpa khanāvaur̄m. 6.
 mana-krama-bacana lā'i kīnhē agha, tē kari jatana durāvaur̄m.
 para-prērita iraṣā basa kabahum̄ka kiya kachu subha, sō janāvaur̄m. 7.
 bipra-drōha janu bām̄ṭa paryō, haṭhi sabasōm̄ baira baṛhāvaur̄m.
 tāhūpara nija mati-bilāsa saba santana mām̄jha ganāvaur̄m. 8.
 nigama sēsa sārada nihōri jō apanē dōṣa kahāvaur̄m.
 tau na sirāhim̄ kalapa sata lagi prabhu, kahā ēka mukha gāvaur̄m. 9.
 jō karanī āpanī bicāraur̄m, tau ki sarana haur̄m āvaur̄m.
 mṛdula subhā'u sīla raghupatikō, sō bala manahim̄ dikhāvaur̄m. 10.
 tulasidāsa prabhu sō guna nahim̄, jēhi sapanēhum̄ tumahim̄ rijhāvaur̄m.
 nātha-kr̄pā bhavasindhu dhēnupada sama jō jāni sirāvaur̄m. 11.

Verse no. 142—Oh Lord Sri Ram who is a treasury of grace, benevolence, mercy and kindness (rāma kr̄pānidhi)! I am feeling very hesitant, shy and ashamed before you (sakucata haur̄m ati), and I don't know how to pray to you (kyōm̄ kari binaya sunāvaur̄m).

Whatever I do is opposed to Dharma (“sakala dharama biparīta karata”—i.e. all my deeds are against the principles of righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics and noble conduct). Then oh Lord, why would you like me; why would you be pleased with me (kēhi bhām̄ti nātha! mana bhāvaur̄m)?

[To wit, my evilness is making me reluctant to face you and pray to you as I think you would neglect me and turn away from me.

Refer also to stanza no. 1 of verse nos. 141 and 148.] (1).

Though I know (by hearing and reading of the scriptures) that this entire animate as well as inanimate creation is actually a manifestation of Lord Hari (the Supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being) (jānata haur̄m hari rūpa carācara), but the irony is that I don't see that Lord anywhere even for a fleeting moment or even by chance (maim̄ haṭhi nayana na lāvaur̄m). [To wit, even though I know the basic fact that the Lord is all-pervading and omnipresent because his true form is pure cosmic Consciousness, I am so gross in my mind and intellect, I am so stupid and deluded in my mind, and my world-view is so shortsighted and myopic that can't see you around me.]

Instead of seeing the Lord all around me in this world (albeit in a subtle and sublime form as the all-pervading ‘pure and truthful consciousness’ that not only infuses life into this world but makes it beautiful to behold), I employ my eyes and its ability to see to pursue the sight of beautiful and gorgeous women just like a fly is attracted by the flame, only to get burned by its fire (an̄jana-kēsa-sikhā juvatī, taham̄ lōcana-salabha paṭhāvaur̄m)¹.

[¹Just like a fly is attracted to the brightness of the flame of a candle and gets burned as a result, I too allow my eyes to follow the sight of attractive women only to be smitten by their charms so much so that I lose my peace of mind and restfulness,

and instead begin to lust for these women as if that was the only aim for me. This leads to perpetual misery, and kills my peace and happiness.

It's so unfortunate that instead of having the soothing sight of the Lord around me in this world, a sight that would actually give me sustained joy and happiness, I stupidly try to derive pleasure by allowing my eyes to pursue the sight of women.] (2).

I understand myself and teach others (*samujhauṁ, samujhāvaum*) that the real purpose and fruits of the ears is in hearing the glorious and virtuous stories of the Lord (*śravanani kō phala kathā tumhārī, yaha*), but I use these same ears constantly to listen to gossip, to the faults, shortcomings and sins of others (*tinha śravanani paradōṣa nirantara suni*).

I hear such evil talks till my heart is full of them, and consequently I find myself sucked unnecessarily in the vortex of constant sorrows, miseries and torments due to the perplexity that this causes me (*sunī sunī bhari bhari tāvaum*)².

[²While hearing good things and divine preachings related to the Lord God and spiritual well-being gives peace to the mind and heart, hearing about evil things and faults of others corrupts the mind and heart, fills them with agitation, and robs them of their peace and tranquillity. But stupidly I indulge in it. I desist from hearing the Lord's stories, but find interest in hearing gossip and worldly things.] (3).

By using this tongue to sing your grand virtues, magnificent glories and divine stories (*jēhi rasanā guna gā'i tihārē*) I can effortlessly obtain abiding happiness and bliss effortlessly (*binu prayāsa sukha pāvaum*), but ironically, instead of doing so, I use it to chant (i.e. repeat and gloat at) the faults of others like the croaking of a frog (*tēhi mukha para-apavāda bhēka jyōm*).

Indeed, I am wasting my birth (i.e. my time and life) in this worthless and futile activity (*raṭi-raṭi janama nasāvaum*)³.

[³Here, talking about worthless things pertaining to the world is compared to the croaking of frogs. Such talk is waste of time and energy, and fruitless. Tulsidas says how foolish it is for a person to waste the energy and time of his tongue by talking endlessly about the worthless things of the world instead of devoting the same time and energy in praising the Lord and remembering his holy name as it would give immense spiritual joy, bliss and happiness that are sustainable and real.] (4).

I go on repeatedly preaching others (*kahi kahi sabahim sikhāvaum*) that they should purify their hearts, for then only will Sri Hari (Lord Ram) reveal himself to them and also reside inside their thus-purified hearts (*'karahu hṛdaya ati bimala basahim hari'*)—but in my own heart (*hauṁ nija ura*) I give shelter to the hordes (*maṇḍalī basāvaum*) of evil thoughts, to all sorts of negativities such as pride, vanity, ego, hypocrisy, attachments, infatuations, arrogance etc. (*abhimāna-mōha-mada khala*)⁴.

[⁴Lord Ram would live in the heart that is clean and pure. Here Tulsidas says that it is easy to preach others to clean their hearts, but mighty difficult to implement this advice personally.] (5).

By acquiring the human body, wise aspirants try various means (*Sadhans*) to achieve the most exalted and supreme state of existence by attaining the holy feet of the Lord

(i.e. attain emancipation and deliverance of the soul from this world, and have oneness with the Supreme Soul of this creation) (jō tanu dhari haripada sādhamiṃ jana), whereas I am wasting it (the human body) uselessly, without any rhyme or reason (sō binu kāja gamvāvaum).

Alas! There is a golden pot full of nectar in my house (hātaka-ghaṭa bhari dharyō sudhā gr̥ha), but it is such a great tragedy and an irony that I try to get a well dug in the sky to get water to drink (taji nabha kūpa khanāvaum)⁵! [How stupid am I indeed!]

[⁵Here, the golden pot of nectar is the human body in which dwells the pure consciousness that is an eternal fount of bliss and beatitude. This human body is an instrument by which one can attain the exalted and the supreme state of transcendental existence which is absolute bliss, and which is like tasting the nectar of beatitude and felicity. Instead of using this golden chance, I fritter it away in running after the illusive and transient charms of the sense objects of this material, gross, perishable and mundane world. Am I not utterly foolish? How can I ever expect to have happiness and joy in this life with this stupid attitude?] (6).

The various sins, evil things and wrongs that I have done employing my speech, mind and deeds (mana-krama-bacana lā'i kīnhē agha), I try to conceal them to the best of my abilities by adopting different means and tactics (tē kari jatana durāvaum).

But if I ever happen to do a single good deed (such as doing charity, showing mercy to others, or helping them) (kabahum̐ka kiya kachu subha) even by getting inspiration from others or by copying them, or out of jealousy for them (for I want to show off and pretend to be better and more righteous than someone else who has done a similar good deed) (para-prērita iraṣā basa)—then I advertise it, I go about boasting of it, I roam about beating a loud trumpet and telling all and sundry about my good deed (sō janāvaum).

[To wit, I try to hide my shortcomings and evil by all means. But if I happen to do something good, I boast of it.] (7).

Creating animosity, discord and hostility towards Brahmins (i.e. those who are senior, wise and exalted class of people in the society) has become my habit (as if it my share of deeds to be done) (bipra-drōha janu bām̐ṭa paryō). I stubbornly and unnecessarily enhance enmity, malice and hatred with one and all (haṭhi sabasōm baira barhāvaum).

In spite of me being so sinful and corrupt (tāhūpara), I allow my mind to have a flight of fancy by comparing myself with great saints and holy souls who have wisdom and high knowledge (niya mati-bilāsa saba santana mām̐jha ganāvaum). [To wit, I boast and pretend to be a wise and righteous person in the company of others while knowing fully well that I am guilty of misdemeanours and evil conduct.] (8).

Oh Lord (prabhu)! Even if I beg the four Vedas, Lord Seshnath and Goddess Saraswati to describe and list my sins, vices and faults (nigama sēsa sārada nihōri jō apanē dōṣa kahāvaum), their counting would not end even by the end of 100 Kalpas, so huge and countless my misdeeds and sins are (tau na sirāhiṃ kalapa

sata lagi). Then say, how and to what extent can I narrate them with a single mouth before you (kahā ēka mukha gāvaum)?⁶

[⁶Tulsidas uses the inability of Vedas, Seshnath and Saraswati to narrate his sins and faults to mean that they are so numerous that they can't be counted. The Vedas are competent in describing everything in existence; Lord Seshnath is the celestial serpent with thousand heads and equal number of tongues by which he can speak; and Goddess Saraswati is the patron goddess of speech and knowledge.] (9).

If I pay attention to my deeds and sins (jō karanī āpanī bicāraum), can I ever gather courage to come and seek refuge at your holy feet (tau ki sarana haum āvaum)?

But I constantly remind my mind and intellect, and strengthen my resolve and encourage them by telling them about (sō bala manahim dikhāvaum) Lord Sri Ram's most tender nature as well as his extreme tolerant and forgiving temperament (mr̥dula subhā'u sīla raghupatikō)⁷.

[⁷To wit, Tulsidas says that inspite of his being totally unsuitable to present himself before Lord Ram due to his sins, he still knows that the Lord would accept him and give him shelter because the Lord is forgiving and merciful to the highest level. The Lord overlooks the faults and shortcomings of those who plead guilty before him, and grants them pardon. This gracious and accomodating nature of Lord Ram acts as an encouragement for all sinners to surrender themselves before the Lord and seek pardon and blessing from him.] (10).

Oh Lord! This Tulsidas does not possess even a single virtue or quality by which he can imagine to make you pleased even in his dreams (tulasidāsa prabhu sō guna nahim, jēhi sapanēhum tumahim rijhāvaum).

But oh Lord! In front of and compared with your benevolence, mercy, grace and kindness (nātha-krpā), this ocean-like world is small like the groove made on the ground by the hooves of a cow (i.e. very tiny and inconsequential) (bhavasindhu dhēnupada sama). [To wit, it is easy to overcome the miseries associated with this world by the grace of the Lord. No problem in this world is so big that it cannot be overcome by the grace of the Lord God.]

Considering this fact, I feel assured and satisfied that (inspite of my being perverse, pervert, depraved, decadent and hopelessly wicked and sinful) I shall easily cross this ocean by the virtue of your kindness and mercy (jō jāni sirāvaum) (11).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, specially his devotees, in this verse. Refer also to verse no. 141 herein above.]

The wayward tendency of the Mind

(143)

सुनहु राम रघुबीर गुसाई, मन अनीति-रत मेरो।
चरन-सरोज बिसारि तिहारे, निसिदिन फिरत अनेरो ॥१॥

मानत नाहिं निगम-अनुसासन, त्रास न काहू केरो।
 भूल्यो सूल करम-कोलुन्ह तिल ज्यों बहु बारनि पेरो॥2॥
 जहँ सतसंग कथा माधवकी, सपनेहुँ करत न फेरो।
 लोभ-मोह-मद-काम-कोह-रत, तिन्हसों प्रेम घनेरो॥3॥
 पर-गुन सुनत दाह, पर-दूषन सुनत हरख बहुतेरो।
 आप पापको नगर बसावत, सहि न सकत पर खेरो॥4॥
 साधन-फल, श्रुति-सार नाम तव, भव-सरिता कहँ बेरो।
 सो पर-कर काँकिनी लागि सठ, बेंचि होत हठि चरो॥5॥
 कबहुँक हौं संगति-प्रभावतें, जाउँ सुमारग नेरो।
 तब करि क्रोध संग कुमनोरथ देत कठिन भटभेरो॥6॥
 इक हौं दीन, मलीन, हीनमति, बिपतिजाल अति घेरो।
 तापर सहि न जाय करुनानिधि, मनको दुसह दरेरो॥7॥
 हरि पश्यो करि जतन बहुत बिधि, तातें कहत सबेरो।
 तुलसिदास यह त्रास मिटै जब हृदय करहु तुम डेरो॥8॥

(143)

sunahu rāma raghubīra gusā'īm, mana anīti-rata mērō.
 carana-sarōja bisāri tihārē, nisidina phirata anērō. 1.
 mānata nāhīm nigama-anusāsana, trāsa na kāhū kērō.
 bhūlyō sūla karama-kōlunha tila jyōm bahu bārani pērō. 2.
 jaham̐ satasaṅga kathā mādhavakī, sapanēhum̐ karata na phērō.
 lōbha-mōha-mada-kāma-kōha-rata, tinhasōm̐ prēma ghanērō. 3.
 para-guna sunata dāha, para-dūṣana sunata harakha bahutērō.
 āpa pāpakō nagara basāvata, sahi na sakata para khērō. 4.
 sādhana-phala, śruti-sāra nāma tava, bhava-saritā kaham̐ bērō.
 sō para-kara kām̐kinī lāgi saṭha, bēnci hōta haṭhi cērō. 5.
 kabahum̐ka haum̐ saṅgati-prabhāvatēm̐, jā'um̐ sumārāga nērō.
 taba kari krōdha saṅga kumanōratha dēta kaṭhina bhaṭabhērō. 6.
 ika haum̐ dīna, malīna, hīnamati, bipatijāla ati ghērō.
 tāpara sahi na jāya karunānidhi, manakō dusaha darērō. 7.
 hari paryō kari jatana bahuta bidhi, tātēm̐ kahata sabērō.
 tulasidāsa yaha trāsa miṭai jaba hr̥daya karahu tuma ḍērō. 8.

Verse no. 143—[The ideas expressed in this verse find their resonance in Tulsidas' epic book "Ram Charit Manas", in its Uttar Kand (or Canto 7), from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 39—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 40, and in "Dohawali", verse nos. 375, 394-412. However, the context there is different vis-à-vis to the one in the present verse of Vinai Patrika, for the present verse describes the wayward habit of the creature's mind, while the other verses cited above refer to the evil character of non-saints. But if we look closely we would find that actually there is no difference in the context of all these verses because the conduct and habits of a non-saint is also controlled by his 'mind' which is the theme of this present verse.]

Listen my dear Lord Ram Raghubir (Sri Ram, the brave, valiant and the most exalted Lord of the Raghu's line of Kings; "rāma raghubīra gusā'īm"); listen to me (sunahu)!

My Mana (mind, thought and heart combine) is engrossed and submerged in doing injustice of all kinds, for it is involved in unrighteous thoughts, and it allows me to conduct myself in an improper and unrighteous way (mana anīti-rata mērō).

Unfortunately I have forgotten (about the spiritual bliss, happiness, solace and comfort that are available at) your lotus-like holy feet (carana-sarōja bisāri tihārē), and instead I wander aimlessly, day and night, among the pleasures of the sensual objects of this material world, pursuing them with greedily with a lot of zest (nisidina phirata anērō)¹.

[¹To wit, instead of seeking the pristine kind of nectar of sublime bliss and pure joy that are enduring in nature and of the best quality, and which are available in abundance at your your holy feet, which I can easily access by worshipping you and surrendering my self before your divine feet to seek your grace and mercy, I am so stupidly seeking comfort and pleasure in the external gross world of sense objects which give something that is not only superficial and transient but also the cause of many other problems of which I am immediately not aware, but which nevertheless lurk in the darkness and ready to pounce upon me at the slightest pretext.] (1).

My Mana is so arrogant and stubborn that neither does it listen to the advice or instructions given by the Vedas (the ancient scriptures) (mānata nāhīm nigama-anusāsana), nor is it afraid of anybody or anything else (trāsa na kāhū kērō). [To wit, it is not even affright of punishment for its misdemeanours and reckless attitude.]

On numerous occasions, it has been crushed and has suffered repeatedly in the grinding machine representing the deeds done by it and their effects much like the mustard seed that is crushed for extracting its oil (bhūlyō sūla karama-kōlunha tila jyōm), but still in its ignorance and stupidity it has forgotten that suffering, and having learnt nothing from past experience it has once again resumed its old habits (bahu bārani pērō)².

[²The Vedas and wise men have always advised the mind to refrain from thinking of and doing evil deeds as they have a cumulative bad effect that robs the mind of its comfort, peace and happiness for which it gets involved in these deeds in the first place. The mind has repeatedly gone through the evil effects or the punishment that comes with such deeds, but it is so foolish that it once again does the same thing which had made it suffer so horribly in the past. It has experienced how pursuing this material world has never gotten it its peace and happiness for which it ran after the world, but have caused it constant misery and grief instead. In spite of this bad experience and knowledge, my mind still runs after this world to seek comfort and pleasure in it.] (2).

When there is a congregation of saints and pious people where holy stories of Lord Madhav (Lord Sri Ram) are narrated (and their subtle spiritual messages explained) (jaham̐ satasaṅga kathā mādhavakī), this Mana would never think of going there even in its dreams (sapanēhum̐ karata na phērō). [The mind feels bored in these places and it tends to avoid such communities or gatherings of saints and holy people.]

Instead, it shows more affinity and likeness for, and it loves to be in the company of those (*tinhasōm prēma ghanērō*) who are engrossed and indulgent in all the evil tendencies associated with this gross existence, such as having all sorts of worldly greed, avarice, covetousness, attachments, pride, vanity, haughtiness, lust, passion, anger, spite, malice, discord, hatred etc. (*lōbha-mōha-mada-kāma-kōha-rata*) (3).

Hearing about the good character and virtues of others, my Mana burns with the fire of jealousy and envy (*para-guna sunata dāha*), and on hearing about the faults, shortcomings and vices (and the consequent suffering) of others, it exults and becomes extremely glad (and wishes to hear more of it) (*para-dūṣana sunata harakha bahutērō*).

It is developing a city of sins, negativities and vices for its self (*āpa pāpakō nagara basāvata*), but it can't tolerate to see even a small hamlet (Khera) of others' sins, faults and vices (*sahi na sakata para khērō*)³.

[³In this context, refer to verse no. 141, stanza no. 4, and verse no. 142, stanza no. 7 which speak of the same thing.

To wit, the mind, ridden with a fattened sense of vanity and ego, thinks that it is extremely righteous and without any trace of faults in it, though it is ridden with all the evils one can imagine of. Overlooking its own shortcomings, it magnifies even the smallest trace of negativity and bad trait in others. It has a profane tendency to criticise others and pricks holes with even the trifling sins and faults of others, whereas it neglects, overlooks or ignores its own huge tranche of similar shortcomings.] (4).

Oh Lord; your holy name 'RAM' (pronounced "RAAM") is the fruit of all Sadhans (various spiritual means, paths and methods that one adopts and follows to attain liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation); it is the essence of the Vedas (i.e. it is what the scriptures preach and prescribe) (*sādhana-phala, śruti-sāra nāma tava*); and it is like a sturdy ship to help one cross this huge and turbulent river symbolising this mundane world of transmigration (*bhava-sarītā kaham' bērō*).

It's such an irony that this wicked wretch known as the 'Mana', in spite of knowing all this, prefers to roam about selling such a great and holy Name of yours to others for worthless pennies of the material world in exchange (*sō para-kara kām'kinī lāgi saṭha, bēñci*), and allows its self willingly to become their slave in return (*hōta haṭhi cērō*)⁴.

[⁴Tulsidas here refers to professional preachers and pseudo holy men who literally go about hawking, or 'selling', the divine name of God to earn money, followers and fame for themselves in this world. They don't realise that it is like bartering a priceless gem for worthless piece of glass, of exchanging nectar for dirty water. And of course it is their mind that is the main culprit to be blamed in this scenario, as it is the mind that drives and motivates a creature to do anything at all. Why, couldn't the mind tell such people that what they intend to do, and what they are actually doing, is utterly wrong and detrimental to their own spiritual welfare, not to speak of the burden of sins that they are accumulating by misleading others for their selfish material gains?

For instance, 'milk' is meant to nourish the body, and it is not to be misused by using it as a 'washing medium' for the gross body, for which we have plentiful supply of 'water' instead. Its extremely stupid, arrogant, extravagant and horrifying to

imagine to waste milk this way when it can instead be used to feed so many hungry and undernourished and under-privileged children.] (5).

If by the good effects or influence of the community of saints (*kabahuṃka hauṃ saṅgati-prabhāvatēm*) I happen to be positively affected and somehow manage to go near or towards the path of God, or an auspicious path that would lead to my spiritual welfare and good (*jā'um̐ sumāraga nērō*), then this Mana plays the spoilsport by arousing in me a sense of longing and attachment for a number of material things of this world along with their incumbent pleasures and comforts. These temptations are so overwhelming that I fail to resist them, and I fall for this enticement, and lured by them I get pushed and shoved into a dark pit of negativity and bad traits so typical of this mundane gross world, such as inculcating in myself different kinds of desires, perversions, depravity, decadence, immorality, and many other such vices (*taba kari krōdha saṅga kumanōratha dēta kaṭhina bhaṭabhērō*)⁵.

[⁵Tulsidas says that if by some good chance a person happens to come in contact with saints and becomes wisely aware of the importance of not getting entangled in the material world because its charms are transient and bring more grief to the person than the comfort it seems to give him, the unfaithful mind immediately intervenes and plots against him. The mind somehow prevails upon the still-undecided and wavering man, who is accustomed to enjoying the fantastic world, that the charms of the world are not only astounding but also available now and here for him to enjoy as compared to the happiness and joy that he would get sometime in the distant future by following the path of God, and perhaps he may not get what he wants at all by the latter path which he has not yet tested.

If this man is not of a firm resolution and wise, if he has no confidence in the truthfulness of saints and in what they teach selflessly for the spiritual welfare of others, if he doubts them and the scriptures as well, it is sure that he would fall in the trap of temptations that the mind lays out for him with respect to the world and its many physical charms and attractions in a very enticing manner.

So what happens is that this unfortunate man is misled by his own mind and he gets bored in the company of saints; he would rather enjoy sitting and gossiping with those who talk endlessly about the material world. This latter company will leave its own indelible mark on his character—such as having vices of various kinds, having desires, greed, lust, impatience, anger, depravity and decadence, immorality and perversion, and so on and so forth.] (6).

Oh my Lord who is a mine of kindness and mercy (*karunānidhi*)! On the one hand I am all alone and surrounded by a web of miseries, troubles and ill-fortunes of so many kinds and of such a great proportion (*bipatijāla ati ghērō*) that they make me feel so desolate, helpless and hopeless, and my predicament is further compounded by my low intellect, my miserable and pitiable condition, and the many evils and vices that crowd me from all sides (*ika hauṃ dīna, malīna, hīnamati*)—and in spite of my sufferings this Mana of mine continues to subject me to more horrors by constantly tormenting me, by constantly pushing and shoving me, by persistently needling me (*manakō dusaha darērō*) so much that it has now become absolutely intolerable for me, and I can't cope with it (*tāpara sahi na jāya*). [So, oh Lord, please have pity on me and save me from this horror created by my Mana.]⁶.

[⁶Tulsidas says that he is unable to fight back or resist the temptations which are constantly pushing and nudging at his mind and intellect. Due to the weakening effects of Kaliyug, he has lost the strength and courage to withstand this assault. He can win this war if only Sri Ram helps him to control his mind and overcome its evil designs.] (7).

I have tried numerous ways and have lost courage and hope (*hari paryō kari jatana bahuta bidhi*). Therefore, I tell you at the outset (*tātēm kahata sabērō*) that this fear of Tulsidas (arising out of the horrible torments of birth and death) can only be removed and mitigated if you make your abode (i.e. take up permanent residence) in his heart (*tulasidāsa yaha trāsa miṭai jaba hṛdaya karahu tuma dērō*)⁷.

[⁷As is evident here, the saintly Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to live in his heart permanently in a subtle form. This is achieved by constantly remembering the Lord and feeling his divine presence at all times of one's life. This will ensure that the person not only feels blessed and blissful in his life, having a true friend in the form of the Lord with him to help him at all times, but he also would automatically guard himself against any evil thoughts coming into his mind as his mind will now be engaged in the thoughts and memory of the Lord who is without any corruption.

Just as a vacant or empty mind is the workshop of devil which leads to the ruin of the man, a mind occupied by the Lord is a workshop which prepares the man for his eternal good and everlasting welfare.] (8).

The Power of Lord Rāma's Holy Name

(144)

सो धौं को जो नाम-लाज तें, नहिं राख्यो रघुबीर।
 करुनीक बिनु कारन ही हरि हरी सकल भव-भीर॥1॥
 बेद-बिदित, जग-बिदित अजामिल बिप्रबंधु अघ-धाम।
 घोर जमालय जात निवाख्यो सुत-हित सुमिरत नाम॥2॥
 पसु पामर अभिमान-सिंधु गज ग्रस्यो आइ जब ग्राह।
 सुमिरत सकृत् सपदि आये प्रभु, हस्यो दुसह उर-दाह॥3॥
 ब्याध, निषाद, गीध, गनिकादिक, अगनित औगुन-मूल।
 नाम-ओटतें राम सबनिकी दूरि करी सब सूल॥4॥
 केहि आचरन घाटि हौं तिनतें, रघुकुल-भूषन भूप।
 सीदत तुलसिदास निसिबासर पर्यो भीम तम-कूप॥5॥

(144)

sō dhaum̐ kō jō nāma-lāja tēm, nahim̐ rākhyō raghubīra.
 karunika binu kārana hī hari harī sakala bhava-bhīra. 1.
 bēda-bidita, jaga-bidita ajāmila biprabandhu agha-dhāma.
 ghōra jamālaya jāta nivāryō suta-hita sumirata nāma. 2.
 pasu pāmara abhimāna-sindhu gaja grasyō ā'i jaba grāha.
 sumirata sakṛta sapadi āyē prabhu, haryō dusaha ura-dāha. 3.

byādhā, niṣāda, gīdhā, ganikādhika, aganita auguna-mūla.
 nāma-ōṭatēm rāma sabanikī dūri karī saba sūla. 4.
 kēhi ācarana ghāṭi hauṁ tinatēm, raghukula-bhūṣana bhūpa.
 sīdata tulasidāsa nisibāsara paryō bhīma tama-kūpa. 5.

Verse no. 144—Oh Lord Raghubīra (Sri Ram)! Who is there whom you have not given refuge and shelter (i.e. promise of protection and safety) for the sake of maintaining the sanctity, the good fame and the wonderful mystical powers (that frees the creature from all his worries and torments) that are inherent in and characteristic of your holy name (sō dhauṁ kō jō nāma-lāja tēm, nahim rākhyō)?

Oh Hari (Ram)! You show mercy and kindness selflessly upon a creature, and remove the fear arising from this world (consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death and their incumbent horrors) even without having any specific or urgent cause or reason for doing so (karunika binu kārana hī hari harī sakala bhava-bhīra)¹.

[¹To wit, it is the Lord's nature and habit to provide solace and succour to all those who take refuge with him and seek shelter under the protective shade of the Lord's holy name. The selflessly gracious and benevolent Lord helps all to overcome the fear of this world of transmigration by being merciful and kind towards all of them in a universal way, and without distinction of any kind. The Lord shows his grace selflessly, without expecting any thanks from anybody, without any obligations of any kind whatever. Verily and in all sooth, the Lord is a selfless benefactor for all living beings.] (1).

It is well-known in the Vedas as well as the world (bēda-bidita, jaga-bidita) that a person named Ajamil of the Brahmin race (ajāmila biprabandhu) was an embodiment of great sins and vices, and he had countless faults in him (agha-dhāma).

At the time of his death, literally at the time of his departure for Yam's Loka where the suffering is hellish (ghōra jamālaya jāta), he had called out your name 'Narain' (or Narayan), though it was ostensible for the purpose of calling his son with a similar name. But since he had called your name (Narayan), you had intervened and stopped him from going to hell and suffering there (nivāryō suta-hita sumirata nāma)².

[²The story of Ajamil is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book Vinai Patrika.] (2).

Similarly, when the Crocodile (grāha) had caught hold of the feet of the king of Elephants (known as 'Gaja') who was an ocean of (i.e. full of) haughtiness and vanity, and was a sinful and lowly animal (pasu pāmara abhimāna-sindhu gaja), and when the Crocodile was ready to drag him into the water to devour him (grasyō ā'i jaba)—at that time oh Lord, as soon as the panicky Elephant did one good thing which was to remember you and seek your protection (sumirata sakṛta), you had rushed forward barefoot instantly (sapadi āyē prabhu) to protect and liberate him from the clutches of his tormentor. You had thus removed the Elephant's intolerable agonies and had given him liberation from the horrors of certain death in the jaws of the Crocodile that was about to kill him (haryō dusaha ura-dāha)³.

[³The story of the liberation of the elephant from the clutches of the death in the jaws of the crocodile is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika.] (3).

The cruel hunter and bandit (i.e. Valmiki), Nishad (the boatman), the vulture (Jatau), Ganika (the prostitute named Pingala) and other numerous living beings (*byādha, niṣāda, gīdha, ganikādika, aganita*) who were all virtual treasuries of sins and vices and misdeeds (*aganita auguna-mūla*)—Oh Lord Ram, they were all freed from the fear, the agony and the suffering caused by their sins by the grace of your holy name RAAM which acted like a strong shield to protect them from their torments and misfortunes (*nāma-ōṭatēm rāma sabanikī dūri karī saba sūla*)⁴.

[⁴To wit, Lord Ram's holy name gave freedom to all these sinners who would otherwise have had to suffer hugely due to their sinful lives. All of them became easily eligible for liberation and deliverance by uttering the holy name of Lord Ram though they were highly sinful and evil otherwise. The Lord's holy name acted like a shield around them, affording them protection from the scourging effects of their sinful lives.

The story of Valmiki and Jatau is narrated in verse no. 57, stanza no. 3, of Nishad in verse no. 134, stanza no. 4, and of Ganika in verse no. 94, stanza no. 3.] (4).

Oh the Lord who is like an ornament (jewel) of King Raghu's family of Ayodhya, and is the most exalted Lord of all (*raghukula-bhūṣana bhūpa*)! How am I a lesser evil and a less sinful person than any of them (i.e. the persons cited by me herein above in this verse) in any way (with respect to any of my deeds and behaviour) (*kēhi ācarana ghāṭi haum tinatēm*)?

Inspite of that, I, Tulsidas, am suffering night and day in the fierce, dark and fearful well of ignorance in which I have fallen (*sīdata tulasidāsa nisibāsara paryō bhīma tama-kūpa*)⁵!

[⁵Oh Lord! If you could save those creatures whom I have mentioned above, I beg you to save me also and mitigate my sorrows and troubles like you did for them. I am no less a sinner than any of them, and if it is your wont and famed reputation that you are committed to save even those who are the worst affected and hopeless cases, those who are great sinners and evil persons, than why do you not pay attention to me because I am no better than any of them. If these sinners were eligible for receiving a special treatment from you, then I too fit the bill perfectly. You cannot therefore deny me my right of having your grace and mercy.] (5).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

A symbolic village in the name of Lord Śrī Rāma

(145)

कृपासिंधु! जन दीन दुवारे दादि न पावत काहे ।
जब जहँ तुमहिं पुकारत आरत, तहँ तिन्हके दुख दाहे ।।1।।
गज, प्रह्लाद, पांडुसुत, कपि, सबको रिपु-संकट भेट्यो ।
प्रनत, बंधु-भय-बिकल, बिभीषन, उठि सो भरत ज्यों भेट्यो ।।2।।

मैं तुम्हरो लेइ नाम ग्राम इक उर आपने बसावों।
 भजन, बिबेक, बिराग, लोग भले, मैं क्रम—क्रम करि ल्यावों॥३॥
 सुनि रिस भरे कुटिल कामादिक, करहि जोर बरिआई।
 तिन्हहिं उजारि नारि—अरि—धन पुर राखहिं राम गुसाई॥४॥
 सम—सेवा—छल—दान—दंड हौं, रचि उपाय पचि हास्यो।
 बिनु कारनको कलह बड़ो दुख, प्रभुसों प्रगटि पुकास्यो॥५॥
 सुर स्वारथी, अनीस, अलायक, निटुर, दया चित नाहीं।
 जाउँ कहौं, को बिपति—निवारक, भवतारक जग माहीं॥६॥
 तुलसी जदपि पोच, तउ तुम्हरो, और न काहू केरो।
 दीजै भगति—बाँह बारक, ज्यों सुबस बसै अब खेरो॥७॥

(145)

krpāsindhu! jana dīna duvārē dādi na pāvata kāhē.
 jaba jaham̐ tumahiṁ pukārata ārata, taham̐ tinhakē dukha dāhē. 1.
 gaja, prahalāda, pāṇḍusuta, kapi, sabakō ripu-saṅkaṭa mēṭyō.
 pranata, bandhu-bhaya-bikala, bibhīṣana, uṭhi sō bharata jyōṁ bhēṭyō. 2.
 mair̐ tumharō lē'i nāma grāma ika ura āpanē basāvōṁ.
 bhajana, bibēka, birāga, lōga bhalē, mair̐ krama-krama kari lyāvōṁ. 3.
 suni risa bharē kuṭila kāmādika, karahiṁ jōra bari'ā'ir̐.
 tinhahiṁ ujāri nāri-ari-dhana pura rākhahiṁ rāma gusā'ir̐. 4.
 sama-sēvā-chala-dāna-daṇḍa hauṁ, raci upāya paci hāryō.
 binu kāranakō kalaha baṭō dukha, prabhusōṁ pragaṭi pukāryō. 5.
 sura svārathī, anīsa, alāyaka, niṭhura, dayā cita nāhīṁ.
 jā'um̐ kahām̐, kō bipati-nivāraka, bhavatāraka jaga māhīṁ. 6.
 tulasī jadapi pōca, ta'u tumharō, aura na kāhū kērō.
 dījai bhagati-bām̐ha bāraka, jyōṁ subasa basai aba khērō. 7.

Verse no. 145—[Continuing with his pleas as made in the last stanza of the previous verse no. 144, Tulsidas asks Lord Ram—]

Oh an Ocean of Mercy (krpāsindhu)! I wonder why this humble follower of yours (i.e. Tulsidas) is not getting any help and succour at your doorstep (i.e. from you) (jana dīna duvārē dādi na pāvata kāhē).

When and wherever (jaba jaham̐), those who were distressed, distraught, miserable and sorrowful had called out to you and pleaded for your mercy and grace (tumahiṁ pukārata ārata), you had responded positively and instantly by removing their agonies and torments right there (taham̐ tinhakē dukha dāhē). [But alas, you seem not to listen to my pleadings. Lord, why is it so?] (1).

You had removed all the sufferings and torments inflicted upon Prahalad, Gajraj (the king of elephants), the Pandavas, Sugriv etc. by their respective enemies (gaja, prahalāda, pāṇḍusuta, kapi, sabakō ripu-saṅkaṭa mēṭyō).

When Vibhishan¹—who was extremely terrified and agitated due to fear from his elder brother Ravana (the demon king of Lanka) (bandhu-bhaya-bikala, bibhīṣana)—had come to seek refuge and protection from you by surrendering before you and had prostrated before you (pranata), you had met him immediately, lifting

him up and affectionately embracing him as if he were your own younger brother Bharat (uṭhi sō bharata jyōm bhēṭyō). [Say of Lord, then why are you not heeding me and my prayers? Why, am I worse than him? Why aren't you showing at least the same sort of treatment to me, if not something more better?]

[¹Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana and a devout devotee of the Lord in the form of Sri Ram. He was like an oasis of devotion, faith and love in the desert of demons and their reckless misdemeanours and cruelties. He had advised Ravana that Sri Ram was no ordinary prince, and that Sita should be returned to Ram if Ravana wished to save Lanka and himself from total destruction. This advice annoyed Ravana who kicked Vibhishan and ordered him to leave his city. Vibhishan was very exasperated by his brother's behaviour of insulting in full court, and so in consternation and indignation he decided to go and seek refuge with Lord Ram. The Lord not only warmly welcomed him in his camp but also anointed him as the next king of Lanka. The story of Vibhishan and his surrender to Lord Ram, and his subsequent anointment by the Lord as the next king of Lanka has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

In the final battle with Ravana, it was he who had told the secret of Ravana's life and invincibility—the elixir of life cocooned in his navel. Sri Ram killed Ravana by shooting an arrow, among others, at his navel and absorbing or drying up the nectar. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 102.

But, Vibhishan got the eternal ignominy of being symbolic of betrayal and fratricide.] (2).

By using the means of chanting your holy name, and on the strength of it, I desire to establish a holy village in my heart (mair̥m tumharō lē'i nāma grāma ika ura āpanē basāvōm).

In order to populate this village, I search here and there for good, auspicious noble and pious entities symbolised by the grand virtues such as that of worship, veneration, devotion, wisdom, discrimination, renunciation, detachment etc., and invite them one by one to gradually come in and reside in this village which I wish to establish in my heart in your name (bhajana, bibēka, birāga, lōga bhalē, mair̥m krama-krama kari lyāvōm) (3).

But hearing about this noble venture of mine, countless wicked forces symbolised by such negativities as desires, lust, anger, greed, avarice, attachments, infatuations, arrogance, pride, vanity, hypocrisy, jealousy, envy and other such wicked ones become annoyed (suni risa bharē kuṭila kāmādika); they don't like me cleansing my inner self (for they fear for their own habitat, and wonder what would happen to them if I allow good virtues to take a firm root in my heart as well as in my mind). So, they have all teamed together to throw a spanner in the wheel and disrupt everything for me.

These naughty fellows are interfering in my efforts and creating a lot of mischief and nuisance for me by forcefully trying to eject any good inhabitants (i.e. good characters, virtues, habits, temperaments and traits) that I manage to somehow bring into the noble village I intend to establish inside my heart (karahim̥ jōra bari'ā'īm).

Oh my dear Lord Ram (*rāma gusā'īm*), in place of the good things with which I try to fill my heart, these rascals bring in vile and evil ones such as wicked women, enemies, wealth and other such vices, and make them take up residence in my symbolic village (i.e. in my heart) (*tinhaīm ujāri nāri-ari-dhana pura rākhahīm*)².

[²Tulsidas here says that after realising that his heart needs to be purified of all negativities and corruptions so that it can be turned into an abode of Lord Ram where abiding peace and eternal bliss can be experienced, he is trying his best to inculcate good habits, noble virtues and ideal characters in him. But despite his best efforts there are some strong negative forces that dampen his spirits as they do not like his cleansing efforts. Whatever good virtues and characters Tulsidas tries to establish in his heart, the negative forces listed herein above neutralise his endeavours.

For instance, suppose he tries to develop dispassion in his heart, then immediately the passions that are naturally but latently present inside him raise their hoods in his mind and heart, and he once again begins to lust for the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects of the world and begins to yield to the temptation to gratify his sense organs. If he takes two steps forward towards righteousness with great effort, he is pulled back more than two steps by the evil forces. So in this scenario, the poor creature sees no hope except from Lord Ram.

Refer also to verse no. 147, stanza no. 2 herein below.] (4).

I have become tired and weary of adopting various dignified means or methods to achieve my noble objectives, such as practicing the principles of *sama* (treating all alike with courtesy and sweetness), *sēvā* (selfless service), *chala* (being clever, prudent and practical in my dealings with others to ensure that my objective is not compromised), *dāna* (giving charities, alms and donations to accumulate religious merit), and *daṇḍa* (using force if someone tries to disturb me and spoil my efforts).

Despite all my efforts, I have failed to fulfil my objectives (of getting rid of evil characters from my heart, and instead establish good virtues in my inner-self) (*raci upāya paci hāryō*). This seems to be an endless and futile battle for nothing; it is an endless quarrel between the good and the bad for no rhyme or reason, and which has sapped me of my energy, causing unnecessary tension for me, and has drained me of my will-power to fight a protracted battle with evil forces that are beyond my abilities to win (*binu kāranakō kalaha baṛō dukha*).

So that is why, distraught, frustrated and flabbergasted, I have at last decided to openly plead my case before you, and have therefore petitioned you today, because I am unable to cope with this agitation and tension in my heart any longer (*prabhusōm pragaṭi pukāryō*) (5).

[Tell me oh Lord, before whom else could I have narrated my sorrows, miseries and agonies except your Lordship, because—] The Gods are egoist and selfish (*sura svārathī*); they lack necessary power and are unable to offer any help to me (*anīsa*). They are also not competent to tackle this grave issue (*alāyaka*), and are too hard-hearted, arrogant and stubborn to have any empathy or sympathy for me (*niṭhura*). Their mind does not have mercy (because they are 'selfish' and 'egoist', and would help only those who are destined to succeed even on their own) (*dayā cita nāhīm*)³.

In this situation, pray tell me, where can I go (other than seeking refuge at your holy feet) (*jā'um̐ kahām̐*)? Who else except you can remove the countless troubles, tribulation and miseries that have swamped me from all sides (for I don't expect any help from any of the gods) (*kō bipati-nivāraka*)? Who can take me across this ocean of mundane world of transmigration (with its huge waves and fast whirlpools of countless problems and unsurmountable troubles) (*bhavatāraka jaga māhīm*) (6).

[³Tulsidas basically says that in this world everyone is driven by self-interest, and the gods are no exception to this rule. The gods need appeasement and offerings in return of extending favours and boons. It is only Lord Ram who is a selfless friend and benefactor for the creature, no matter how lowly and humble the latter may be.

Refer also to (i) verse no. 163, stanza no. 2 herein below in this book *Vinai Patrika*; and (ii) *Ram Charit Manas*, *Lanka Kand*, *Chaupai* line no. 2 that precedes *Doha* no. 110; *Uttar Kand*, *Chaupai* line nos. 4-6 that precede *Doha* no. 47.]

[Therefore, with this solid conviction, this saint says—] Oh Lord, though Tulsidas is wretched, humble and poor and a good-for-nothing fellow (*tulasī jadapi pōca*), but still, after all, he is yours (*“ta'u tumharō”*—i.e. your devotee, dependant and follower), and he does not belong to anyone else (for he has you as his only Lord and Master) (*aura na kāhū kērō*).

[To wit, Tulsidas knows of only ‘one Lord’, and he is ‘you’, oh Lord Ram. Tulsidas is absolutely, unequivocally, irrefutably and unflinchingly loyal to you, and only you, oh Lord Ram. He is devoted to no one else except you.]

Considering this fact that this fellow Tulsidas is one of your ‘own’ (i.e. he is your very own devotee and humble follower), please be kind and gracious enough to lend him the protection and strength of your arms (*dījai bhagati-bām̐ha bāraka*) so that this village that he tries to establish in his heart in your name can be rehabilitated (*jyōm̐ subasa basai aba khērō*).

[To wit, bless Tulsidas that by the strength of your devotion, worship and affection, good virtues would prosper in his inner-self, and all the vices and evils would be eliminated.] (7).

Tulasīdāsa pleads with Lord Śrī Rāma to accept him

(146)

हौं सब बिधि राम, रावरो चाहत भयो चरो ।
 ठौर ठौर साहबी होत है, ख्याल काल कलि केरो ॥1॥
 काल-करम-इंद्रिय-बिषय गाहकगन घेरो ।
 हौं न कबूलत, बाँधि कै मोल करत करेरो ॥2॥
 बंदि-छोर तेरो नाम है, बिरुदैत बड़ेरो ।
 मैं कह्यो, तब छल-प्रीति कै माँगे उर डेरो ॥3॥
 नाम-ओट अब लागि बच्यो मलजुग जग जेरो ।
 अब गरीब जन पोषिये पाइबो न हरो ॥4॥
 जेहि कौतुक बक/खग स्वानको प्रभु न्याव निबेरो ।

तेहि कौतुक कहिये कृपालु! 'तुलसी है मेरो' ॥५॥

(146)

haurṁ saba bidhi rāma, rāvarō cāhata bhayō cērō.
 ṭhaura ṭhaura sāhabī hōta hai, khyāla kāla kali kērō. 1.
 kāla-karama-indriya-biṣaya gāhakagana ghērō.
 haurṁ na kabūlata, bām̐dhi kai mōla karata karērō. 2.
 bandi-chōra tērō nāma hai, birudaita baērō.
 maiṁ kahyō, taba chala-prīti kai mām̐gē ura ḍērō. 3.
 nāma-ōṭa aba lagi bacyō malajuga jaga jērō.
 aba garība jana pōṣiyē pā'ibō na harō. 4.
 jēhi kautuka baka/khaga svānakō prabhu n'yāva nibērō.
 tēhi kautuka kahiyē kṛpālu! 'tulasī hai mērō'. 5.

Verse no. 146—Oh Ram, the Great King and Lord (rāma, rāvarō)! I am truly and by all means yours (haurṁ saba bidhi rāma), and I sincerely want to become the Lord's faithful servant (i.e. I want to be a loyal follower, an ardent and faithful devotee of yours—"rāvarō cāhata bhayō cērō") but everywhere I find that there are so many others who want to become my master and lord over me (ṭhaura ṭhaura sāhabī hōta hai). [For instance, my mind, heart and the gross organs of my body are all trying to dominate and overpower me. They want that I should spend all my energy and effort to appease them and fulfil their demands. They fear that if I become your devotee and follower, then I would not obey them and leave them high and dry.]

I think that all this is the nuisance created by Kaliyug, the current era of corrupt practices; I am flummoxed and aghast at it (khyāla kāla kali kērō)¹.

[¹To wit, in this age it is very difficult to lead a righteous and pious way of life that would lead one towards God and realisation of the Conscious Self. It is easier to lead a life of instant pleasure, comfort and sense gratification by diving head-on in the gross world and its material charms rather than to focus on the seemingly dry and lonely path of self-realisation that leads to attainment of bliss and happiness that seems far away and far-fetched though it is everlasting and of a pristine nature.

In one's pursuit of the spiritual path, the main culprits that cause hindrances in his path are not to be found anywhere outside, for they are one's own body and its sense organs that are close to the spiritual aspirant that the latter can't avoid them as he can't even imagine to live in this world without them; they are his constant companion and part and parcel of his existence. In this scenario, his condition becomes very precarious, for his detractors and enemies are his own body and its sense organs. The reason is that the latter have the habit of seeking easy comfort and pleasure that the material things of the world give them, and the body itself likes self-gratification and physical joys so much so that it would always deter the seeker from pursuing the path of renunciation, detachment and dispassion because it dry and would prevent the body and its sense organs from fulfilling their desires and objectives.

Even if the spiritual aspirant manages to do some meritorious deeds and makes strenuous efforts to attain self-realisation and enlightenment by practicing Yoga, Tapa, Dhyan and Vairagya (i.e. meditation, austerity, contemplation and renunciation etc. respectively), the body and its sense organs are quick to throw a spanner in the

wheel and act spoil-sport, throwing up such a fit that the person soon becomes disgusted and frustrated by their fierce needling and constant nagging so much so that he thinks it better to surrender to them rather than oppose them, for otherwise they would make life hell for him. So he soon yields to their pressures and falls away from his chosen spiritual path.] (1).

The customers in the shape of Kaal (time, circumstance), Karma (deeds) and Indriya (sense organs of perception and action of the gross body of the creature) have surrounded me from all sides (*kāla-karama-indriya-biṣaya gāhakagana ghērō*).

When I refuse to sell myself at their hands and become their slave (*hauṁ na kabūlata*), they forcefully tie me and put a price on me (*bāṁdhi kai mōla karata karērō*)².

[²To wit, when these entities discover that I am going to my Lord Ram to offer myself at his service, they become jealous and think that I have gone nuts by willingly going to offer myself for free in someone's service. Who would not like to have such a fool to serve him for free, and encash his foolishness. They think that I am a slave who has escaped from some earlier master and am now going to offer myself to another master just to escape being caught and punished by my former lord. So they pounce upon me like greedy hounds and merchants of slaves!

The result is that I am caught by them like a fleeing slave, and then I am tied and auctioned in the marketplace by any trader who manages to lay his hands upon me. These three entities have me bound; I come under their control, and am left at their mercy and whims. If I try to resist them, they put a formidable bait before me in the form of material comforts and pleasures from the gross world which are so tempting that I willingly fall for them and bite this bait. This leads to my fall and disgrace; I get distracted and instead of pursuing the path that would lead me to my true and exalted Lord Sri Ram, the Lord who will actually love and care for me, and instead I allow myself to get enslaved by these rascals who are blood-suckers and driven by selfish interests.

That is to say, I cannot escape the consequences of time, circumstances, the deeds done by me, and the natural urges and desires of my body no matter how hard I try. I become a slave of time, circumstances, deeds and the urges of my body so much so that my progress to Lord Ram and spiritual enlightenment is hindered.] (2).

Your holy, divine and glorious name has the potential, the strength and the mystical power to free those who are tied in this horrible way and are suffering from such a stifling bondage (*bandi-chōra tērō nāma hai*). This is your grand reputation, and you have yourself made such a great and solemn vow (that you would liberate all those who remember your name) (*birudaita barērō*).

When I told those customers above-named that I have already sold myself to you (*"mairṁ kahyō"*—i.e. when I told them that I am already sold to some other Lord and Master because I have become Lord Ram's devotee and follower, and therefore I am not free to be purchased or enslaved by them), they pretended to show false affection towards me and asked me politely to allow them a place of residence in my heart (so that they can surreptitiously sneak in and create havoc for me later on by robbing whatever spiritual assets such as bliss, beatitude, wisdom, realisation and enlightenment as well as renunciation, detachment, dispassion etc. that I would slowly collect and gather in my heart by the virtue of my service to Lord Ram) (*taba chala-prīti kai māṁgē ura dērō*)³.

[³In the beginning, these three entities tried to force themselves upon me. They tried to compel me to enter the vortex of deeds driven by time and circumstances, and force me to oblige the demands for gratification of the body. But when I told them that I am a devotee of Lord Ram, and hence would not fall in this trap, they pleaded with me to show some degree of humanity and kindness towards them because they are also a part of life and have a right to live in my heart, albeit in a subdued form, as ordained by the Creator at the time of creation.

But the problem is this: If I show even a slightest degree of goodwill and humanity towards them by allowing them even a temporary and a small place to make a foothold, they would gradually overpower me and get firmly entrenched in my heart. Gradually, they will expend their roots and one day upset my entire cart!] (3).

Uptil now I was able to shield and save myself by relying on the support and strength of your holy name (nāma-ōṭa aba lagi bacyō), but now this wicked fellow known as ‘Kaliyug’ is getting on my nerves, and is overpowering me so much so that sooner rather than later it would conquer me (malajuga jaga jērō).

Hence I plead with you oh Lord, please protect this poor servant of yours without losing time (aba garība jana pōṣiyē), for otherwise you will not be able to find him even after a long search (pā’ibō na harō)⁴.

[⁴Oh Lord, if you are not quick, you may lose me forever, because by some time later on this wicked Kaliyug would have taken me away, bound in shackles and enslaved to him due to some slip I may inadvertently make while engaging myself in doing some of my worldly deeds, or while attending to the needs of my body, or while trying to negotiate the difficult terrain of my life through the maze of time and circumstances that I would have to encounter.] (4).

Oh Lord! As you had done justice to the bird (owl)⁵ and the dog⁶ (jēhi kautuka baka/khaga svānakō prabhu n’yāva nibērō), you should now do justice to me by telling Kaliyug in no uncertain terms that “this Tulsidas is mine” (and so leave him alone) (tēhi kautuka kahiye krpālu! ‘tulasī hai mērō’). [This declaration of yours would be sufficient to prevent Kaliyug from harassing me any further because he dare not confront or oppose you in any way.] .

[⁵The fable of the owl :- In a forest lived an owl and a vulture on the same tree. The vulture wanted to eject the owl and occupy the nest all for himself, so he told the latter that the tree belonged to him and so he (owl) should move out. To settle the dispute, both approached the court of Sri Ram. On being asked, the owl replied ‘Lord, I have been living on this tree ever since the tree was created’, while the vulture said, ‘I have been living there ever since humans and animals were created’. Sri Ram made the following justice, ‘Look, the tree was created prior to the humans and animals, so the owl lived on it earlier. So, the vulture should vacate the place.’

⁶The fable of the dog :- Once a dog came to the court of Sri Ram and complained that a Brahmin called Tirtha-Siddhi had hit him on the head. On query, the Brahmin replied that the dog had refused to move out of his path so he had hit him. The fault of the Brahmin was greater than the dog. Seeing Sri Ram in a moral dilemma because Brahmin could not be punished, the wise dog suggested, ‘Lord! Make this man a pontiff of Kalinjar Mutt. I was one such abott in my previous life. Having enjoyed myself of the wealth of the temple, I have to come to such a state i.e., have become a dog. He also would become a dog in his next birth and get smitten and kicked by someone else.’

Refer also to verse no. 165, stanza no. 4 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (5).

Evils and Vices are like Pseudo Friends that Ruin a Person

(147)

कृपासिंधु ताते रहौं निसिदिन मन मारे।
 महाराज! लाज आपुही निज जाँघ उधारे॥1॥
 मिले रहैं, माख्यौ चहैं कामादि सँघाती।
 मो बिनु रहैं न, मेरियै जाँरैं छल छाती॥2॥
 बसत हिये हित जानि मैं सबकी रुचि पाली।
 कियो कथकको दंड हौं जड़ करम कुचाली॥3॥
 देखी सुनी न आजु लौं अपनायति ऐसी।
 करहिं सबै सिर मेरे ही फिरि परै अनैसी॥4॥
 बड़े अलेखी लखि परैं, परिहरे न जाहीं।
 असमंजसमें मगन हौं, लीजै गहि बाहीं॥5॥
 बारक बलि अवलोकिये, कौतुक जन जी को।
 अनायास मिटि जाइगो संकट तुलसीको॥6॥

(147)

kṛpāsindhu tātē rahauṁ nisidina mana mārē.
 mahārāja! lāja āpuhī nija jāṁgha udhārē. 1.
 milē rahaiṁ, māryau cahaiṁ kāmādi saṁghātī.
 mō binu rahaiṁ na, mēriyai jāraiṁ chala chātī. 2.
 basata hiyē hita jāni maiṁ sabakī ruci pālī.
 kiyo kathakakō daṇḍa hauṁ jaṛa karama kucālī. 3.
 dēkhī sunī na āju lauṁ apanāyati aisī.
 karahiṁ sabai sira mērē hī phiri parai anaisī. 4.
 baṛē alēkhī lakhi paraiṁ, pariharē na jāhīṁ.
 asamanjasaṁmēṁ magana hauṁ, lījai gahi bāhīṁ. 5.
 bāraka bali avalōkiyē, kautuka jana jī kō.
 anāyāsa miṭi jā'igō saṅkaṭa tulasīkō. 6.

Verse no. 147—Oh Lord (Sri Ram) who is an ocean of mercy and compassion (kṛpāsindhu)! I keep quiet night and day (i.e. always) because, oh the great Lord (tātē rahauṁ nisidina mana mārē mahārāja), one gets to shame by baring his own thighs (i.e. becoming naked) (lāja āpuhī nija jāṁgha udhārē)¹!

[¹Tulsidas means that there is no worthwhile purpose served by going around pleading with sundry gods, deities and others in this world about one's personal problems because everyone would show lip service to him and only laugh behind his back; no one would actually help a person in need when the times are bad for him. So it is better not to go pray to others gods and deities and masters and lords of this world, asking them for forgiveness and redemption from the evil effects of one's bad deeds or seeking blessings and boons from them.]

By approaching them with a prayer, one would be obviously exposing one's own weaknesses, faults, sins and evils before them. Instead of actually helping a suffering creature, they would all exploit his situation and extract their bit of flesh from him by making him offer this and that as offerings and oblations in order to seek their favour, or some boon and blessing from them.] (1).

Kaal (time, circumstances), Karma (deeds and their consequences), Indriyas (sense organs of the body) and Vishaya (lust, desire, passion pertaining to the sense objects of the world) are all so wicked and scheming (*kāmādi samṅhātī*) that they pretend to be a friend of mine and mix freely with me (*milē rahaiṁ*), but at the same time they wish to kill me treacherously (*māryau cahaiṁ*).

They don't live without me and don't leave me alone either (saying that they are my best and fast friends) (*mō binu rahaiṁ na*), but at the same time they cause intense heart-burn to me by their deceitful and treacherous deeds and behaviour (*mēriyai jāraiṁ chala chātī*)².

[²To wit, all of these above-mentioned entities pretend to be dear to me and my well-wishing companion, but literally they do not hesitate to stab me in my back, and they do everything within their might that would only cause suffering and grief to me.

Here these entities have been personified. Refer also to verse no. 145, stanza no. 4 herein above. A person gets entangled in the web of circumstances, time, deeds done by him, the demands of his body and its organs, and the temptations of the material things of the external world as well as the necessity of engagement with the same world for the purpose of existence. This is a vicious cycle, for one problem created by a combination of these factors leads to another.] (2).

Thinking that these entities are my guests because they reside in my heart (in a subtle form as an integral and unavoidable part of my inherent nature, character and emotions as a human being) (*basata hiyē hita jāni mairiṁ*), I had done my bid to keep them in good humour by satisfying and pleasing them to the best of my ability (i.e. I have reasonably tolerated them, even shared my emotions with them, and I have kind of 'played ball' with them) (*sabakī ruci pālī*).

Inspite of this, these wretched rascals and scheming fellows are very wicked and ungrateful (*jaṛa karama kucālī*), for instead of thanking me and leaving me alone they have made me into a wooden puppet, making me dance to their tunes (*kiyō kathakakō daṇḍa hauṁ*)³!

[³Tulsidas means that a person ordinarily tries everything within his might to keep his body and its sense organs pleased, happy and comfortable by meeting their demands and trying his best to fulfil their needs. But they are so ungrateful to him that instead of leaving him alone to pursue whatever path he has chosen for himself as long as their basic needs and demands are met, they all conspire to enslave him and rob him of whatever freedom he has by forcing him to do only their bidding, and nothing that he would like to do freely for himself. Therefore, a person is forced to be tempted to the material world and pursue its charms and pleasures because this is what the the body and its sense organs want, instead of doing something for his spiritual welfare and enlightenment, something for his liberation, deliverance and emancipation.] (3).

Such a treacherous and ungrateful kinship or friendship I have never heard or seen before (dēkhī sunī na āju laur̥m apanāyati aisī)—the deeds are actually done by others, while all the evil results, the bad name associated with such evil deeds, the blame, the blemishes, the blasphemy and the taints etc. are all piled upon my head (karaḥim̥ sabai sira mērē hī phiri parai anaisī)⁴!

[⁴The true identity of a living being is his Atma or soul which is pure consciousness, and it is distinct from his gross physical body. But the world recognises the individual from his body because it can't see his Atma which is invisible. This great metaphysical truth is being invoked by Tulsidas to say here that though the external deeds that a person does and all his behaviour are motivated by the gross sense organs of his body that are aided and abetted by the subtle components of the same body such as the mind and intellect, the accusation for everything goes to the individual, and it is he who has to suffer the consequences of all the good and the bad deeds done by the selfish and wicked body.

The result is that the Atma, his true and real 'self', becomes a helpless victim to the evil designs of his own body, and suffers due to this unfortunate relationship. The irony is that a person can't help it—because he can't live without the body. So a devotee requests his Lord God to help him out of this paradoxical situation where on the one hand he can't live and do anything without his body, and on the other hand the same body becomes the greatest obstacle for him. So he asks God to bless him so that he can overcome the hurdles and nuisance created in his spiritual progress by these wicked companions of his, i.e. his body and its various components.] (4).

They⁵ all appear very unjustified and unjust to me, but I am unable to discard them; I am unable to forsake them and drive them away from me (baṛē alēkhī lakhi paraim̥, pariharē na jāhīm̥).

[⁵Who are the "they"? The answer is found in line no. 1 of stanza no. 2: they are the group of vices such as Kaam etc., i.e. they are such vices as lust, passion, desires etc. that live right inside my own heart: kāmādi sam̥ghātī]

I find myself on the horns of a great dilemma; I am aghast and utterly perplexed, not knowing what to do and how to get rid of them (asaman̥jasamēr̥m magana haur̥m).

Oh Lord, please be kind to catch hold of my arms and extricate me from this precarious situation (which is horrifying and sucking me in like a person caught in a quagmire, for if you do not help me then these rascals would surely kill me) (lījai gahi bāhīm̥) (5).

I earnestly plead before you oh Lord to at least for once have a merciful and compassionate glance at me like you would do for a child (and observe my pathetic condition) (bāraka bali avalōkiyē, kautuka jana jī kō)⁶.

[⁶When a child fools around and lands himself in some great trouble, say like falling in a pond, his loving father looks at him with alarm and immediately lifts him up by his arm. Likewise, Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to pull him out of his pitiable condition by holding his hands.]

Tulsidas' woes, his miseries, sorrows and torments would end immediately and without the least trouble and effort (anāyāsa miṭi jā'igō saṅkaṭa tulasikō) when your glance falls upon him (like the rays of the sun, thereby chasing away these hordes of evils, vices and sins as if they were ghosts of the darkness of the night) (6).

Tulasīdās' Humility

(148)

कहौं कौन मुँह लाइ कै रघुबीर गुसाईं ।
 सकुचत समुझत आपनी सब साइँ दुहाई ॥1॥
 सेवत बस, सुमिरत सखा, सरनागत सो हौं ।
 गुनगन सीतानाथके चित करत न हौं हौं ॥2॥
 कृपासिंधु बंधु दीनके आरत—हितकारी ।
 प्रनत—पाल बिरुदावली सुनि जानि बिसारी ॥3॥
 सेइ न धेइ न सुमिरि कैपद—प्रीति सुधारी ।
 पाइ सुसाहिब राम सों, भरि पेट बिगारी ॥4॥
 नाथ गरीबनिवाज हैं, मैं गही न गरीबी ।
 तुलसी प्रभु निज ओर तें बनि परै सो कीबी ॥5॥

(148)

kaḥaurṁ kauna mumḥa lā'i kai raghubīra gusā'irṁ.
 sakucata samujhata āpanī saba sā'imḥ duhā'ī. 1.
 sēvata basa, sumirata sakhā, saranāgata sō haurṁ.
 gunagana sītānāthakē cita karata na haurṁ haurṁ. 2.
 kṛpāsindhu bandhu dīnakē ārata-hitakārī.
 pranata-pāla birudāvalī suni jāni bisārī. 3.
 sē'i na dhē'i na sumiri kaipada-prīti sudhārī.
 pā'i susāhiba rāma sōm, bhari pēṭa bigārī. 4.
 nātha garībanivāja haim, mairṁ gahī na garībī.
 tulasī prabhu nija ōra tēṁ bani parai sō kībī. 5.

Verse no. 148—Oh Raghubīra, Oh Lord (“gusā'irṁ”—i.e. Sri Ram)! With what face can I say anything to you (kaḥaurṁ kauna mumḥa lā'i kai)¹?

I say truthfully that when I consider my actions and deeds, I keep quiet due to shame and hesitation (because I can't gather enough courage to face your majesty with my bundle of evil and sinful deeds and actions) (sakucata samujhata āpanī saba sā'imḥ duhā'ī) (1).

[¹Refer also to stanza no. 1 of verse nos. 141 and 142.]

[But I don't understand that my hesitation and reluctance to face you is misplaced and uncalled for. Don't I know that—] You can be easily prevailed upon or made to have a special consideration or concession for a person who does loyal, faithful, devoted and selfless service to you or for you (sēvata basa). Similarly, you can be easily befriended by merely remembering you (sumirata sakhā), and you welcome when one comes to seek shelter and refuge at your holy feet (saranāgata sō haurṁ).

It's such a great irony and my bad luck that I do not pay attention to these great virtues and noble characters that Lord Sitanaath (the dear husband or the Lord of

Sita) inherently and naturally possesses (gunagana sītānāthakē cita karata na haum haum)².

[²Tulsidas says that one should not fear Lord Ram at all, and come clean before the Lord. One should not think or hesitate that since one's life is sinful and full of evil, the Lord would become angry at him or turn him away if he goes to the Lord seeking to surrender himself and ask for his blessings and mercy. But such a person must remember that though it is true that the Lord would welcome him with open arms, he would not tolerate cunning and pretensions. The desire to seek the Lord's refuge should be sincere and honest. Then one should be sure to be granted his wishes without questions. See the next stanza.]

Oh Lord! You are an ocean of mercy, kindness, grace, benevolence and compassion (krpāsindhu); you are a friend of the meek, the humble, the distressed and the wretched ones (bandhu dīnakē); you are a benefactor and well-wisher of those who are distressed, tormented, miserable and sorrowful (ārata-hitakārī); you are the sustainer and care-taker of those who have surrendered before you, and have taken refuge and sought shelter in your holy feet (pranata-pāla).

Inspite of having heard and knowing about this grand reputation of your majesty, and understanding these renowned and virtuous qualities of yours (birudāvalī suni jāni), I still have forgotten them or have ignored them (bisārī) (3).

I had neither done any devoted service to you, nor have I meditated upon your divine form or shown true affection and love for you to mend my ill-fate (sē'i na dhē'i na sumiri kaipada-prīti sudhārī).

Inspite of having the good fortune of getting such an exalted and the best of Lords that ever existed in this creation for myself (pā'i susāhiba rāma sōm), I had only created strife, discord and malice with you till my stomach was literally full of it (i.e. I had committed enough of this mischief) (bhari pēṭa bigārī)².

[²To wit, instead of being grateful and obliged to you for your mercy and kindness, and having love, affection, devotion, reverence and faith in you, I go about accusing you for all my ills and miseries, for all my troubles and tribulations. Instead of using this golden opportunity of having such a wonderful and merciful Lord as Sri Ram as my patron, well-wisher, helper and protector to attain eternal happiness, joy, contentedness, bliss and peace, I had spent my life in such a way that I got only suffering, pain and misery.

Therefore, I am so unworthy and unloyal and ungrateful to you really. I should be ashamed of myself to the extreme.] (4).

You are the merciful Lord who shows compassion, mercy and kindness on the poor, the meek, the lowly and the wretched (nātha garībanivāja haim), but I did not become one such (maim gahī na garībī)³.

[³To wit, I did not become humble before you as my egoist self prevented me from doing so, and therefore I continued to suffer and could not benefit from this boon of yours.]

So, oh Lord (don't search in vain for any reason or excuse by which you can show some kindness and mercy to me, but) just look at yourself (i.e. at your own benevolent, merciful and gracious nature and reputation), and do whatever you can or

deem it fit to do for me, Tulsidas, and for my welfare (tulasī prabhu nija ōra tēm bani parai sō kībī)⁴.

[⁴To wit, oh Lord, if you look for some good thing in me so that you can help me, then you will not be able to help me at all as I have nothing to my credit. So I pray to you not to bother yourself about what kind of a person I am, but you should look at your own reputation and nature of providing solace and succour to those who are sinful, lowly, helpless and miserable to accept me as one of your own, and redeem me.

Refer also to verse no. 149, stanza no. 7; and verse no. 150, stanza no. 5.

Tulsidas exorts his Lord Ram not try and find an excuse by which he can hold the hands of Tulsidas and say ‘Tulsidas, I bless you’, for he is so very sinful that the Lord will be lost in examining the means to save him. There is no point in the Lord seeking some good virtues in Tulsidas’ personal profile to help him find peace and succour because the latter is totally devoid of any good thing to offer.

The best path would therefore be for the Lord to simply accept Tulsidas as he presently is, in his present condition, and think of his (Lord’s) own immaculate reputation with respect to providing solace and succour to the lowly and humble in this regard.

Here, Tulsidas has played a clever card by asking the Lord to take into consideration his own reputation to bless him. Instead of asking for any specific boon, or making any specific demand, he has left the door wide open for the Lord “to do what you can do for Tulsidas”, for he knows fully well that the Lord can do pretty well much, so he will be the gainer in the bargain.

Tulsidas has highlighted Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, specially his devotees, in this verse.] (5).

Pleading with Lord Śrī Rāma

(149)

कहाँ जाऊँ, कासों कहौं, और ठौर न मेरे।
 जनम गँवायो तेरे ही द्वार किंकर तेरे॥1॥
 मैं तो बिगारी नाथ सों आरतिके लीन्हें।
 तोहि कृपानिधि क्यों बनै मेरी—सी कीन्हें॥2॥
 दिन—दुरदिन दिन—दुरदसा, दिन—दुख दिन दूषन।
 जब लौं तू न बिलोकिहैं रघुबंस—बिभूषन॥3॥
 दर्ई पीठ बिनु डीठ मैं तुम बिस्व—बिलोचन।
 तो सों तुही न दूसरो नत—सोच—बिमोचन॥4॥
 पराधीन देव दीन हौं, स्वाधीन गुसाईं।
 बोलनिहारे सों करै बलि बिनयकी झाई॥5॥
 आपु देखि मोहि देखिये जन मानिय साँचो।
 बड़ी ओट रामनामकी जेहि लई सो बाँचो॥6॥
 रहनि रीति राम रावरी नित हिय हुलसी है।
 ज्यों भावै त्यों करु कृपा तेरो तुलसी है॥5॥

(149)

kahām jā'um, kāsōm kahauṁ, aura ṭhaura na mērē.
 janama gamvāyō tērē hī dvāra kiṅkara tērē. 1.
 mairṁ tō bigārī nātha sōm āratikē līnhēm.
 tōhi kṛpānidhi kyōm banai mērī-sī kīnhēm. 2.
 dina-duradina dina-duradasā, dina-dukha dina dūṣana.
 jaba laurṁ tū na bilōkihairṁ raghubansa-bibhūṣana. 3.
 da'ī pīṭha binu dīṭha mairṁ tuma bisva-bilōcana.
 tō sōm tuhī na dūsarō nata-sōca-bimōcana. 4.
 parādhīna dēva dīna hauṁ, svādhīna gusā'irṁ.
 bōlanihārē sōm karai bali binayakī jhā'irṁ. 5.
 āpu dēkhi mōhi dēkhiyē jana māniya sāmčō.
 barī ōṭa rāmanāmakī jēhi la'ī sō bāmčō. 6.
 rahani rīti rāma rāvarī nita hiya hulasī hai.
 jyōm bhāvai tyaurṁ karu kṛpā tērō tulasī hai. 5.

Verse no. 149—Oh Lord, where should I go; whom should I tell about my woes and miseries (kahām jā'um, kāsōm kahauṁ)? I don't have any other destination or point of refuge and shelter (aura ṭhaura na mērē)¹. [To wit, I don't have a friend or a kin with whom I can share my feelings, my sufferings, my problems and my agonies.]

I have spent my life at your doorstep or doorway (janama gamvāyō tērē hī dvāra) like a humble servant (follower, devotee) of yours (kiṅkara tērē), and now I have no other destination where I can go to seek refuge and succour (if you don't pay attention to my prayers and take pity on me)².

¹Refer also to verse no. 179, stanza no. 1 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.

²Tulsidas tells his Lord Ram that he has spent his entire life under the patronage and shelter of the latter, and he has nowhere else to go. He knows none else but his very own Lord Ram, and he has never gone to anyone else in his life to seek anything whatsoever either. So, in front of whom should he now plead about his worries and miseries except the only Lord he knows and has faith in?

The word “dvāra” literally means a door, and the phrase “janama gamvāyō” means to spend one's life. Hence, Tulsidas here means that the devotee of the Lord has spent his entire time and life close to the Lord, had been loyal and faithful to the Lord, and had never sought any help of any kind from anyone else except his chosen Lord. This has invariably created a close and strong bond of kinship between the devotee and the Lord, a bond that is irrefutable, unbreakable and irrevocable. Therefore there is no question of the devotee pleading with anyone else about his problems now, except before the only Lord he knows in his life, and it is Lord Ram.]

Oh Lord, if I had ruined my deeds (i.e. if I had done bad and unrighteous deeds, and had acted unscrupulously in my life—“mairṁ tō bigārī nātha”) then it is because I was extremely agitated and overwhelmed by worries with respect to my sorrows, pitiable conditions, troubles and tribulations so much so that I had lost my wits and wisdom, and did things that I oughtn't have done (sōm āratikē līnhēm)³.

But oh merciful Lord, if you also behave like me (i.e. like an ordinary human being) and reward or punish me according to my deeds (like an ordinary master or

king does to his servant or subject respectively), then what would happen to me, and what would happen to your own reputation (tōhi kṛpānidhi kyōm banai mēri-sī kīnhēm)?⁴

[³When confronted with uncertainties and suddenness of developments that befell me during my course in life, I lost my wits and sense of wisdom and judgement. As a result, I did commit errors by way of doing deeds that I oughtn't have done at all. But oh Lord, I am after all an ordinary human being with his normal failings, shortcomings and limitations. I am not some enlightened sage who would be careful with every step he took in life. I accept that I had lost my wits and could not judge what is good or bad for me when I did anything.

⁴To wit, I can be excused for my bad life and evil deeds because after all I am a human being who is imperfect in every way, but Lord, this argument would not apply to you. You are the Lord of the world, and you have a grand reputation of redeeming those who are fallen and sinful, besides being exemplarily merciful, kind, forgiving, tolerant and compassionate towards one and all. So if you do not give me protection and forgive me for my misdemeanours, if you do not redeem me and punish me for my sins and wayward nature, the world would scorn at you, and it is your own reputation that would suffer the most. Of course I will suffer, but it is not much of a matter as I am destined to suffer for all times to come, but the worry is of your reputation and glory which would surely be severely damaged.

Oh Lord, if you just simply take into account what my deeds are and punish me for them without taking into consideration my low level of intellect and wisdom, my humbleness and my panicky state at the time when I faced problems in life that seemed so huge to me that I wanted to save myself with any means I could urgently think of then, I lost my bearing of mind and wits, and may have acted utterly wrongly and committed sins which I should not have, then it would go against your declared vows and your time tested reputation that you extend your helping hand, show mercy and compassion as well as forgive all the misdeeds and mischief of those who have surrendered themselves before you, who have taken refuge and shelter with you, who have nowhere else to go except you, who are unpretentious and have relented, and who have frankly and honestly accepted their misdeeds and beg you for forgiveness.

This being the case, I fit the bill perfectly, and therefore you must show mercy upon me. Though my deeds are very bad, though they are all corrupted, pervert, evil and decadent so much so that there is no chance of any good reward or merit accruing to me ever, but here fortunately comes your gracious and merciful nature into play: It's your established reputation that you forgive and help such vile fellows as me, and hence I am sure of expecting relief and freedom from my troubles when I beg and plead with you.] (2).

Oh the most exalted, the most honourable and the noblest member in the family of king Raghu of Ayodhya ("raghubansa-bibhūṣana"; a reference to Lord Ram)! Till the time you do not look at me with your merciful and compassionate glance (jaba laum tū na bilōkihaim), there will be regular bad times, routine miserable days, constant fear of misfortunes and ill fate, daily round of sorrows, miseries, troubles and plight, and constant blemishes, blames and accusations that would haunt me every moment of my existence, day and night (dina-duradina dina-duradasā, dina-dukha dina dūṣana).

[To wit, the only way I can find freedom from my agonies and miseries, and feel fearless and redeemed, is when you, dear Lord, would look at me benevolently and mercifully. Then all my misfortunes will vanish.] (3).

That I have stubbornly shown you my back (i.e. I have turned against you, or have neglected or opposed you persistently) is because I am without a foresight, and am blind, foolish, ignorant and stupid to the core (*daī pīṭha binu dīṭha mair̥n*).

But I don't understand how you can copy my behaviour by being against me or turning your back to me, or neglecting me. [To wit, you can't be as stupid as I am.]

You see the whole world, both its visible aspect as well as its invisible aspect. And therefore you ought to know the invisible reality that others can't see (*tuma bisva-bilōcana*)⁵.

[⁵To wit, you can see that the deeds done by me are done by my gross body, and not my true identity known as the 'self' which is also called the Atma or the soul. This Atma is pure consciousness, and it is as immaculate and perfect as your own 'Self'. It is surely distinct and independent of the gross body. So how can 'I' be blamed for the misdeeds that my body does? Since you have an enlightened view of things and can see the truth and reality that exists behind the external façade, you can also see how and why I am not to be blamed and punished for my so-called bad deeds. You would also see that I am very honest and sincere when I pray to you for redemption and protection. So by all counts, I deserve your mercy, grace and benevolence.]

You are one in your own likeness and one of your kind in this world (*tō sōm̥ tuhī na dūsarō*) as far as removing the worries, sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations of the humble, the weak, the distressed and the wretched creatures are concerned (*nata-sōca-bimōcana*)⁶.

[⁶To wit, no one is like you as far as removing the sorrows and sufferings of the creature in a selfless way is concerned. No Lord or Master in this world is as merciful, kind, compassionate and graceful as you are.]

Tulsidas means that since he is an ordinary man, there is no surprise in his acting in the stupid way he has done in his life, even at times neglecting the Lord himself who had been the provider of succour and daily bread to Tulsidas. But the Lord must realise that he is not the same as Tulsidas; he must realise that he occupies a high pedestal and is the King of all his subjects in this vast creation; that he ought to act wisely and with a lot of understanding and prudence; that he must show a lot of patience, broadheartedness, benevolence, forgiveness, mercy, grace and compassion befitting a great King and Emperor. The Lord cannot afford to be shortsighted, selfish, imprudent, impatient and mean.

Therefore, inspite of the selfish ways Tulsidas may have acted personally, the Lord must overlook such small transgressions of behaviour like a loving father does while dealing with his son who may not have learned proper ways of conduct yet.] (4).

Oh Lord (*dēva*)! I am dependant on others, and am lowly and humble (*parādhīna dīna haum̥*), while you are independent of all compulsions, and are a Master and the exalted Lord of one and all (*svādhīna gusāīm̥*)⁷.

I say truthfully to you, how can a shadow speak to the speaker who is consciousness personified, who is an embodiment of the supreme, absolute and formless Truth known as 'pure Consciousness'? And so therefore, I will do whatever you command me to do (*bōlanihārē sōm̥ karai bali binayakī jhāīm̥*)⁸.

[⁷To wit, I am bonded to my deeds past and present, to the circumstances of life, to the countless traits, both good and bad, that are inherently present in me as part

of my nature and temparement as a human being, and to the bonds that exist between my physical body and the world. But these limitations do not apply to the Lord, for he is the independent and supreme Lord God of creation.

⁸Here, the ‘shadow’ is Tulsidas, and the ‘speaker’ is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of Sri Ram who resides in Tulsidas’ heart as the life-giving soul which is nothing but pure consciousness, and without whom Tulsidas would be as good as dead.

A shadow follows the object which forms it; a loyal devotee and servant follows his Lord and Master like a shadow. A shadow cannot speak to the principal object that forms it, and likewise a devotee and a servant can’t stand up and speak in the face of his Lord and Master as it would be uncourteous and indecent for him to do so, and such an action on his part would be tantamount to insulting the Lord and the Master as the case may be.

So Tulsidas says that whatever Lord Ram decides for him would be acceptable to him, and though he is praying to him by lying at the Lord’s feet, he would not stand up and object to his decision like a true and loyal servant and devotee who willingly and cheerfully accepts what the Lord decides for him—because he knows that the Lord’s decision would always be for his good and welfare, and never otherwise.] (5).

Hence oh Lord, first see at yourself (realise your true nature as being a merciful and compassionate Lord) and then look at me (as your faithful shadow or servant, one who follows you wherever you go and obeys all your commands) (*āpu dēkhi mōhi dēkhiyē*). Treat me as truthful and honest; treat me as your true and honest servant (devotee and follower) (*jana māniya sām̐cō*)⁹.

I affirm that the protective shield of Sri Ram’s holy name is very strong, robust, potent and infallible (*barī ōṭa rāmanāmakī*). Anyone who has taken the refuge of Lord Sri Ram’s name has been saved (from the cycle of birth and death, and being trapped in this mundane, mortal and gross existence) (*jēhi laī sō bām̐cō*)¹⁰.

[⁹To wit, judge me yourself and don’t believe what I say at its face value. See, I have followed you faithfully throughout my life, come what may, just like a shadow follows a person. Now tell me: can the shadow or the person abandon each other? Of course not; they have an eternal bond that ties them together.

Besides this, the shadow is always dark and inconsequential, while the person who forms this shadow is a conscious and living entity. So oh Lord, in the same manner, there is no comparison between me and you. And therefore you ought to neglect my shortcomings and darkness of character just like a person overlooks his own dark shadow.

¹⁰Tulsidas says that since he has already taken shelter in the holy name of Lord Ram and repeats it constantly, he is not at all worried about his destiny and spiritual welfare, for he knows that they are well taken care of.] (6).

Oh my King and Lord Sri Ram (*rāma rāvarī*)! The thoughts of your excellent characters, noble bearing, benevolent nature, great reputation and virtuous deeds—they are all arising in my heart to create exultation, euphoria, delight and happiness for me; I revel in these thoughts and become ecstatic (*rahani rīti nita hiya hulāsī hai*).

I have left myself in your hands and at the mercy of your holy name. do whatever you deem fit and proper for Tulsidas, for I have stopped worrying at all. But just remember one simple thing—and it is that this Tulsidas belongs to you (i.e. he is your faithful and ardent devotee). So, have mercy and compassion upon him and do what you think fit for him in any way that is convenient and pleasing to you (jyōm bhāvai tyaurm karu kṛpā tērō tulasī hai)¹¹.

[¹¹Refer verse no. 148, stanza no. 5; and verse no. 150, stanza no. 5 also.] (7).

[Note—In the context of this verse, refer also to verse no. 179 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

Kinship with the Lord

(150)

रामभद्र! मोहिं आपनो सोच है अरु नाही।
जीव सकल संतापके भाजन जग माहीं॥1॥
नातो बड़े समर्थसों इक ओर किधौं हूँ।
तोको मोसे अति घने मोको एकै तूँ॥2॥
बड़ी गलानि हिय हानि है सरबग्य गुसाई
कूर कुसेवक कहत हौं सेवककी नाई॥3॥
भलो पोच रामको कहैं मोहि सब नरनारी।
बिगरे सेवक स्वान ज्यों साहिब—सिर गारी॥4॥
असमंजस मनको मिटै सो उपाय न सूझै।
दीनबन्धु! कीजै सोई बनि परै जो बूझै॥5॥
बिरुदावली बिलोकिये तिन्हमें कोउ हौं हौं।
तुलसी प्रभुको परिहर्यो सरनागत सो हौं॥6॥

(150)

rāmabhadra! mōhim āpanō sōca hai aru nāhīm.
jīva sakala santāpakē bhājana jaga māhīm. 1.
nātō barē samarthasōm ika ōra kidhaurm hūm.
tōkō mōsē ati ghanē mōkō ēkai tūm. 2.
barī galāni hiya hāni hai sarabagya gusā'im
kūra kusēvaka kahata haurm sēvakakī nā'im. 3.
bhalō pōca rāmakō kahaim mōhi saba naranārī.
bigarē sēvaka svāna jyōm sāhiba-sira gārī. 4.
asamanjasa manakō miṭai sō upāya na sūjhai.
dīnabandhu! kijai sō'i bani parai jō būjhai. 5.
birudāvalī bilōkiyē tinhamēm kō'u haurm haurm.
tulasī prabhukō pariharyō saranāgata sō haurm. 6.

Verse no. 150—Oh Gentleman Lord Sri Ram (rāmabhadra)! I am both worried as well as free from worries about myself (mōhim āpanō sōca hai aru nāhīm) because all the living beings in this world are the objects of sorrows, miseries and sufferings; all are subjected to suffering to a lesser or greater degree, and therefore I am no exception (jīva sakala santāpakē bhājana jaga māhīm)¹.

[¹To wit, since no one in this world is happy and contented, since no one is free from miseries and sorrows, since everyone is suffering to a lesser or a greater degree, since pains and grief are part of the game of life, I am not too alarmed and worried about myself as I am also one of them, and therefore not an exception.] (1).

Am I the only one who is trying to establish a kinship, i.e. a personal, fraternal and friendly relationship with you (ika ōra kidhaum hūm) who are the most exalted, the most able, the most powerful and the most adept Lord in every respect (nātō barē samarthasōm)?

You have numerous persons like me who must have already established or are eager to establish some kind of relationship with you (“tōkō mōsē ati ghanē”—i.e. there are numerous devotees who call themselves as one of your own and claim to be close to you, for you have a huge following), but for me, you are the only one (“mōkō ēkai tūm”—i.e. for me you are the sole relation, and I have no one else whom I can call mine)².

[²Tulsidas means that since Lord Ram is the powerful and almighty Lord of the world, there is no dearth of followers for him. He always has countless souls at his beck and call, those who feel proud to be close to the Lord and feel privileged to be near the Lord and call themselves as his devotee, who would follow the Lord, obey his orders and bend over backwards to oblige him because they have some vested interests in serving the Lord as he is the almighty and all-powerful Lord of the world.

So therefore it may be that it is for this reason that the Lord is not paying attention to the humble fellow Tulsidas who seems lost in the melee because the Lord is surrounded by a huge crowd of boisterous devotees who mill around him adoringly, cheering and praising the Lord loudly. In this din perhaps the Lord has not been able to pay attention to a humble man called Tulsidas who stands silently somewhere in the midst of this crowd, not mustering enough courage to push through and do some trick to draw the attention of the Lord towards himself.

Hence, Tulsidas politely admonishes his Lord to tell him that he must not neglect someone who is humble and meek like Tulsidas, though the Lord is surrounded by an adoring crowd of cheering devotees and followers. The Lord may have a big company of doting devotees who are too willing to take care of his needs, but Tulsidas is all alone in this world and no one would take care of him if the Lord neglects him, because the latter is the former’s only kith and kin.

Further, since they, Tulsidas and Lord Ram, are both related to each other because both have the same ‘Consciousness’ residing in their bosoms as their true self, albeit the Lord has attained an exalted stature while Tulsidas remains a humble man, the Lord should not neglect his poor and modest kin named Tulsidas as it would cast the exalted Lord in a poor light.] (2).

Oh Lord, you have an insight into the mind and heart of all the creatures as you are all-knowing and omniscient (sarabagya gusāīm). I am feeling very guilty and ashamed in my heart (barī galāni hiya hāni hai) that though I am a wicked, unfit and a bad servant (or an incompetent and ineligible subordinate, follower and devotee) of

yours, though I am unfaithful, treacherous and disloyal to you (*kūra kusēvaka kahata hauṁ*), but I say that I am very faithful, devoted and fully loyal and truthful to my Lord (*kahata hauṁ sēvakakī nāṁ*). How can my deceit, cunning and pretensions be concealed from you? (3).

Nevertheless, whether I am good or evil, all the men and women do call me as being one of Ram's very own (*bhalō pōca rāmakō kahairṁ mōhi saba naranārī*). [To wit, notwithstanding my wickedness and evil nature, the world recognises me as one of your closest devotees, one who is closely related to you, one who has direct access to you, and one upon whom you are specially graceful and kind.]

If a servant or a pet dog is spoilt for some or the other reason and become indisciplined, behaving in a bad way and causing nuisance for others (*bigarē sēvaka svāna jyōm*), it is their lord or master who gets the blame for allowing those under his watch to become indisciplined and bad mannered; the people speak ill of such a lord or master (*sāhiba-sira gārī*)³. [Hence, if I am evil and you do not help me mend my ways, the blame would be at your door.]

[³Oh Lord, if I do commit wrongs, the people would still blame you because you are my Lord. If a servant or the pet dog commit some wrongdoing, the people raise their fingers on the master and the lord, and not at the servant or the pet dog. They say that the servant can't do anything against the wishes of the master, and so obviously the wrong thing he has done has a tacit support of the master. If the servant acts rudely or behaves abnormally, the people would accuse the master of not inculcating discipline in his servant and keeping him in control. The servant is not expected to be of a high moral upbringing, education and culture as to behave properly on his own, and if his master is lax in maintaining discipline in the household then the servant would be apt to be rude and rough in his behaviour.

The problem would be compounded if the master is someone who is powerful and influential, for then the servant would become arrogant and tyrannic because he has access to the ear of this powerful master, and the people would fear backlash if they offend this evil servant or point out his shortcomings to the master himself.

Similarly, if a person's pet dog creates nuisance for the neighbours, they would blame its master that he has not trained the animal properly, and not the animal himself because everyone knows that an animal is naturally inclined to commit mischief if it is not properly trained and restrained.] (4).

I see no way out in my mind of this dilemma (*asamanjasa manakō miṭai sō upāya na sūjhai*)⁴.

Now therefore, oh a friend of the distressed and the poor (*dīnabandhu*), please do for me whatever is possible for you to do, or you think is proper and fit to do (*kījai sō'i bani parai jō būjhai*)⁵.

[⁴What is this dilemma that has so vexed Tulsidas? Well, he is perplexed on two counts as follows: (a) While he has to suffer because all living beings suffer in this world, but there is a problem here. He has unconditionally surrendered himself to Lord Ram, and the Lord is reputed as the one who removes all sorrows of his devotees. So why is he still suffering? Why can't the Lord do something for him?

(b) Tulsidas' bad deeds done in many previous lives and their accumulated evil effects have made him suffer in the present life as well because it is the basic law of Nature and Karma that one reaps what one sows, and besides that he has so many bad qualities in him, but the world would blame Lord Ram for Tulsidas' evil fate

because the world recognises Tulsidas as Lord Ram's servant and devotee. So, though the fault is of Tulsidas himself, he is worried that his innocent Lord Ram would get the blame and stained for no fault of his own.

These two things are troubling Tulsidas extremely.

⁵Refer also to verse no. 148, stanza no. 5; and verse no. 149, stanza no. 7 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' in this context.] (5).

Just have a glance at your own famous reputation and renowned glory (that you are a friend of the miserable, the distressed, the humble and the downtrodden; that you are the purifier of the sinful and the vile; that you are extremely merciful, kind, gracious, compassionate and forgiving; that you embrace the humblest and the lowest; that no one who has come to seek refuge and shelter and protection with you has ever gone empty-handed, and so on and so forth) (*birudāvalī bilōkiyē*).

Surely oh Lord, I must be one of them (*tinhamēm kō'u haum haum*). [To wit, am I not eligible to receive any of your largesse mentioned above; am I not eligible to receive any of your graceful gestures? There is a long list of devotees who have benefited from your kind and gracious nature, all their sins and misdemeanours were forgiven by you and they were all graced by you, then tell me oh Lord why should I not be counted in that list? If you can bless them all, then why not me?]

[In spite of this and despite my reminding you of your reputation and glory as mentioned herein above—] If the Lord still forsakes this Tulsidas and neglects him (*tulasī prabhukō pariharyō*), I say that I would still go and lie at your feet for I have decided that I cannot, and will not, go anywhere else to seek refuge and shelter, except at your holy feet (*saranāgata sō haum*) (6).

If....

(151)

जो पै चेराई रामकी करतो न लजातो ।
 तौ तू दाम कुदाम ज्यों कर-कर न बिकातो ॥1॥
 जपत जीह रघुनाथको नाम नहिं अलसातो ।
 बाजीगरके सूम ज्यों खल खेह न खातो ॥2॥
 जौ तू मन! मेरे कहे राम-नाम कमातो ।
 सीतापति सनमुख सुखी सब ठाँव समातो ॥3॥
 राम सोहाते तोहिं जौ तू सबहिं सोहतो ।
 काल करम कुल कारनी कोऊ न कोहातो ॥4॥
 राम-नाम अनुरागही जिय जो रतिआतो ।
 स्वारथ-परमारथ-पथी तोहिं सब पतिआतो ॥5॥
 सेइ साधु सुनि समुझि कै पर-पीर पिरातो ।
 जनम कोटिको काँदलो हृद-हृदय थिरातो ॥6॥
 भव-मग अगम अनंत है, बिनु श्रमहि सिरातो ।
 महिमा उलटे नामकी मुनि कियो किरातो ॥7॥
 अमर-अगम तनु पाइ सो जड़ जाय न जातो ।
 होतो मंगल-मूल तू अनुकूल बिधातो ॥8॥
 जो मन, प्रीति-प्रतीतिसों राम-नामहिं रातो ।
 तुलसी रामप्रसादसों तिहुँताप न तातो/नसातो ॥9॥

(151)

jō pai cērā'ī rāmakī karatō na lajātō.
 tau tū dāma kudāma jyōm kara-kara na bikātō. 1.
 japata jīha raghunāthakō nāma nahim alasātō.
 bājīgarakē sūma jyōm khala khēha na khātō. 2.
 jau tū mana! mērē kahē rāma-nāma kamātō.
 sītāpati sanamukha sukhī saba ṭhāmva samātō. 3.
 rāma sōhātē tōhim jau tū sabahim sōhatō.
 kāla karama kula kāranī kō'ū na kōhātō. 4.
 rāma-nāma anurāgahī jiya jō rati'ātō.
 svāratha-paramāratha-pathī tōhim saba pati'ātō. 5.
 sē'i sādhu suni samujhi kai para-pīra pirātō.
 janama kōṭikō kāmḍalō hada-hṛdaya thirātō. 6.
 bhava-maga agama ananta hai, binu śramahi sirātō.
 mahimā ulaṭē nāmakī muni kiyō kirātō. 7.
 amara-agama tanu pā'i sō jaṛa jāya na jātō.
 hōtō maṅgala-mūla tū, anukūla bidhātō. 8.
 jō mana, prīti-pratītisōm rāma-nāmahim rātō.
 tulasī rāmaprasādasōm tihumṭāpa na tātō/nasātō. 9.

Verse no. 151—[Symbolising admonishing himself and his mind on behalf of all creatures, Tulsidas laments—] ‘Alas, oh Tulsidas! If (jō) you had not felt ashamed at calling yourself a servant (i.e. a faithful and devoted follower) of Lord Sri Ram (jō pai cērā'ī rāmakī karatō na lajātō), you would not have been sold at a discounted value from hand to hand in spite of inherently being of a high value (tau tū dāma kudāma jyōm kara-kara na bikātō)¹.

[¹To wit, in spite of your true self being the same ‘consciousness’ that is known as the Parmatma, you have forgotten who you actually are; you have been ignorant of the nature of your true and divine self, of your divine origin. And as a result of this ignorance and lack of wisdom, you wander in this world as if you were of low birth and surrounded by misfortunes and miseries, one who is always in some want like a lowly person or a hungry beggar who goes from one door to another just to feed his stomach, and is never contented no matter how much he gets. You were born as a Brahmin, and there was no reason why you should have come to such a pitiable condition if you had shown even a trace of spiritual wisdom that is expected from a learned Brahmin.

Oh you fool! You have been wondering from one birth to another and suffering the consequences because of your lack of awareness about your exalted origin and true nature. You behave like an ordinary creature who is always miserable and wretched though you are so high of pedigree and of noble birth because you are lucky to have a close kinship with the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram. You have forgotten that you are an image of the supreme Consciousness known as the Parmatma—and this simple error on your part has been the cause of all your miseries and troubles.

In short, the cause of all your worldly problems is that you have distanced yourself from Lord Ram and have forgotten that you have a close relationship with

the Lord of the world, and that it being the case there is no reason why you should roam about in such dire straits of wants and miseries. Instead of shying away from calling yourself a devotee, a follower and servant of the Lord, you should have been proud of proclaiming about your relationship with the Lord, for then there would have been no misery and grief for you. But you are so stupid that you chose to do otherwise.

This verse invokes the eclectic philosophy of the Upanishads that the true identity of a creature is his Atma, which is known as the soul and is pure consciousness personified. Further, this individual's Atma is a microcosmic form of the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma, or the Supreme and Transcendental Atma which is also known as the Cosmic Consciousness.

The individual creature's Atma is the 'you' here, i.e. it is the enlightened individual who realises this truth who is being addressed in this verse. This Atma is priceless and the most valuable aspect of any living being because it is a micro-form of the Supreme Being. But out of ignorance and worldly delusions, a person forgets the exalted and divine nature of his 'true self', but suffers from miseries and grief because he erroneously begins to treat his gross physical body as his identity. This is what Tulsidas essentially refers to and means here in this verse.] (1).

If your tongue had not been lazy and got tired of chanting, repeating and reciting Lord Sri Ram's holy name (*japata jiha raghunāthakō nāma nahim alasātō*), then you would not come to such a miserable state that you would have to fill your mouth with dust (symbolising hunger, wants, miseries, sorrows and lowliness in this world) like the way a road side 'bājigara' (a country conjurer, a traditional Tantrik, a maverick player, a country magician who roams around hosting roadside shows to feed his stomach) who fills or stuffs the mouth of his 'sūma' (a wooden toy resembling a man) with indignation if the spectators watching his show fail to give him some money at the end of the show (*bājigarakē sūma jyōm khala khēha na khātō*)².

[²The country magician keeps a tiny wooden toy resembling a man in his bag. If he fails to sufficiently motivate the spectators of his show to give him some money at the end of his roadside performance, he would stick this toy in the ground and pick up some dust from the ground and stuff it in the toy's mouth to symbolise how he would feed himself if he doesn't get enough money. Then he goes around the crowd with a bowl begging for donations, and curses all those who don't give him some money while blessing others who do.

Tulsidas cites this example to say that if a devotee has faith in Lord Ram and chants the Lord's holy name, there is no reason why he won't get sufficient food to fill his stomach, and would have to survive on leftovers got by begging from door to door like a wretched beggar and vagabond.

It also means that if a devotee takes the shelter of Lord Ram and relies on the power of the Lord's holy name, there is no reason why he would have to live a miserable life full of pain and grief and wants which is symbolised by his mouth being stuffed with dust instead of having some good food to eat.

The 'mouth being stuffed with dust' is an idiom indicating insult and humiliation at the hand of others. So, a person would surely invite scorn and ridicule from the world at some point of time in his life if he spends his entire time talking of mundane affairs of the world. In the final run this behaviour would never give him much honour and peace.

It also means wasting precious time in worthless gossip and useless talk instead of using the tongue in repeating the holy name of the Lord which would have a positive implication for the spiritual well-being of the creature.] (2).

Oh my Mana (mind)! If you had listened to my advice and had earned the spiritual wealth symbolised by the jewel known as Lord Sri Ram's holy name (**jau tū mana! mērē kahē rāma-nāma kamātō**), you would have not only come close to Lord Sitapati (Lord Ram, the husband of Sita) and feel blessed, happy and joyful thereby, but you would also have got respect and acclaim everywhere in this world. In all sooth, you would have been able to attend to the well-being of your present existence in this life as well as would have secured an excellent future for yourself (**sītāpati sanamukha sukhī saba ṭhāmva samātō**) (3).

If Lord Sri Ram had appeared pleasing, attractive and charming to you, i.e. if his Holiness had appealed to your mind and heart; if you had been affectionate towards the Lord and had loved him (**rāma sōhātē tōhim jau**), then you would also have been liked by everybody else in this life (**tū sabahim sōhatō**).

Kaal (time, circumstances), Karma (the deeds done by you) and Kula (your kith and kin)—the factors that motivate or inspire a man to behave the way he does, or which control all his emotions and sentiments in his life (**kāla karama kula kāranī**)—none would have been opposed to you; not one of them would have been antagonised with you, and so you need not have bothered about them (**kō'ū na kōhātō**). Rather, all would have been on friendly terms with you, all would have been favourably inclined towards you, and would have helped you in anyway you would have liked them to³.

[³Tulsidas says that if a person begins to have devotion and love for the Lord God, in this case Lord Ram, then even his most staunch opponents begin to show friendliness to him as all fear that by offending the devotee of the Lord they would invite the Lord's wrath. These three factors, viz. 'Kaal', 'Karma' and 'Kula', tie a person in a firm bond from which he finds himself almost impossible to break free while he is still alive in this world. He has to conform to the demands of the circumstances of life that surround him; he has to obey the law of deeds that states that a person is to bear the consequences of whatever he does, whether it is good or bad, and all his kith and kin in this world expect him to fulfil his obligations towards them, take care of their worldly needs such as provide them with food, shelter, clothing etc. If the person fails to oblige any one or all of these three entities, they wreak vengeance upon him. None of them has any mercy upon the poor creature.

But if the same person has taken shelter with Lord Ram and gets the Lord's protection, these three entities are affright of offending him as they now realise that he has the protection of the Lord Emperor of this world, and is not servile to any one of them. On the contrary, they go out of their way to please the Lord's devotee in the hope that the Lord would be pleased with them.] (4).

If you had had love and devotion for the holy name of Lord Sri Ram, if you had been sincere in your heart in having devotion for the Lord and had true love for the Lord in it (**rāma-nāma anurāghā jīya jō rati'ātō**), then those who are selfish and exploit you for their own vested interests as well as those who are selfless and are interested in your welfare would have had been friendly with you (**svāratha-paramāratha-pathī tōhim saba pati'ātō**)⁴.

[⁴To wit, oh my mind, if you had had devotion for Lord Ram and had loved his holy name, then both your worldly interests as well as your spiritual well-being would have been taken care of. You would have been happy in this materialistic world even though you were surrounded by vested interests who are very selfish, and at the same time you would have befriended some noble souls who would have advised you selflessly about your spiritual good and helped you attain success in your spiritual quest. In the former case, you would have done your duties towards your kith and kin in a dispassionate manner, with your mind remaining firmly rooted in the memory or the thoughts of the Lord. This attitude would have bestowed internal calmness and happiness to you.

At the same time as serving the world and carrying out the duties assigned to you and living unto your responsibilities that you are expected to fulfil, you would also have been motivated to search out and spend some quality time with saints and holy men who loved the Lord, and in their company you would have found more internal peace and joy, thus compounding your sense of happiness and feeling of blessedness that you already had by being non-attached to your deeds and relations in this world earlier.

So, if you had loved Lord Ram and had had devotion for him then even while serving the world and surrounded by selfish interests, it would have been possible for you to remain detached from all worldly bondages, to remain aloof from all things mundane and entangling for the spirit, and thereby remain in a state of perpetual joy and happiness. This blissful state of transcendental existence would elude you, it would not be available to you if you have distanced yourself from the Lord.] (5).

If you had served saintly and pious people, and had felt pity and sorry on hearing the miseries of others (*sē'i sādhu suni samujhi kai para-pīra pirātō*), then the scum which has collected over millions of births in your pond-like heart would have settled at the bottom, and your heart would have become pure (*janama kōṭikō kāmḍalō hada-hrdaya thirātō*)⁵.

[⁵To wit then, your innerself would have been purified and filled with the distilled water of spiritualism, a water symbolising purity of devotion and affection for the Lord.] (6).

The passage through this mundane, gross and mortal world of transmigration is infinitely difficult, long and tedious (*bhava-maga agama ananta hai*), but you would have easily covered that same path, you would have happily finished your journey in life had you chanted the holy name of the Lord (*binu śramahi sirātō*)⁶.

When Sri Ram's name is so potent and effective that by repeating it in the reverse, the savage Valmiki had turned into a renowned sage, what then would not have been possible for you by chanting and repeating it straight (*mahimā ulaṭē nāmakī muni kiyō kirātō*)⁷?

[⁶To wit, those who do not take the shelter of Lord Ram's holy name have nothing to protect them and give them shade in their journey through the harsh path of life. Such travellers have to cope with the scorch of the heat and all sorts of problems symbolised by the countless torments and tribulations and travails associated with life in this mortal and mundane world. Obviously, this person feels exhausted and weary half way through the journey, and his path through life seems to be an ordeal for him.

On the other hand, those who have taken the shelter of Lord Ram's holy name have comfort and joy while travelling on the same path like a person who is protected by an umbrella from being scorched by heat of the burning sun overhead during his

journey, and a footwear to protect his legs from being lacerated and bled by the thorns, the roughness and the harshness of the path on which he treads. A devotee thus feels lucky that he had chosen to prepare well in advance before embarking upon the journey of life by seeking the shelter of Lord Ram and his holy name which acts as a soothing balm for him.

⁷Valmiki was a hunter, and he was so sinful that when the celestial sages Sankadi advised him to repent for his sins and seek liberation for himself by repeating the holy name “RAMA” of the Lord, he refused that it is not possible for him to do so. The sages were wise, and they advised Valmiki to repeat the Lord’s name in the reverse order—viz. “MARA”. When repeated, the word “MARA” becomes similar to “RAMA”. So, even without his being aware, Valmiki was repeating the Lord’s holy name. It had its good effect upon him, and he was able to overcome the evil effects of his past sins. The same wicked hunter now became an acclaimed and revered sage by the name of Valmiki, the sage who was visited by Lord Ram himself during his journey through the forest, and who was the first sage to have composed the great epic known as Ramayan which tells the divine story of Lord Ram. This incident is mentioned in Tulsidas’ epic narration of this divine story in his book Ram Charit Manas, in its Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19, and in another book titled “Geetawali”, in its Sundar Kand, verse no. 40, stanza no. 3.

Refer also to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika.

Tulsidas emphasises the power of Lord Ram’s holy name here. What he stresses is that if this name is so powerful and effective that it can turn a savage hunter into a holy man by being used in an very odd way because Valmiki had repeated it in the reverse order, which is like turning it upside down on its head and kind of showing disrespect to it, then one can imagine its marvellous purifying effects if it is used in the proper way, in the correct and prescribed fashion.] (7).

Oh you stupid wretch of a fellow (*jaṛa*)! You wouldn't have wasted this human body, which is even rare for the Gods to adopt, in futility and in vain if you had been wise enough to spend your valuable life in the service of Lord Ram, if you had developed devotion for the Lord, and if you had ensured for your spiritual welfare by repeating the holy name of the Lord; but no, you didn't care for your own good and happiness (*amara-agama tanu pā'i sō jāya na jātō*)⁸.

Had you done so, you would have been a root of welfare and auspiciousness, and the creator would have become favourable and benign towards you (but now unfortunately you find yourself wallowing in miseries and torments of all kinds) (*hōtō maṅgala-mūla tū, anukūla bidhātō*).

[⁸The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly has been repeatedly stressed in Vinai Patrika at a number of places. Some of the instances are verse nos. 83-84, 102, 130, 135/1, 194, 198-202 etc.] (8).

Oh my Mana! If you had attached yourself to Lord Sri Ram's divine and holy name with due love, devotion, faith and conviction (*jō mana, prīti-pratītisōm rāma-nāmahim rātō*), then oh Tulsidas, you would never have burnt in the three tormenting fires known as ‘Traitaps’ that scorch all creatures in this world (*tulasī rāmaprasādasōm tihumtāpa na tātō/nasātō*). [To wit, you would have been able to destroy all the causes that have resulted in so much pain and misery for you.]⁹.

[⁹The three worldly torments are known as Adhyatmik, Adhibhatik and Adidavik. Rarely a creature free from the sufferings inflicted by them. Refer verse no.

17, stanza no. 2; verse no. 81, stanza no. 1; verse no. 83, stanza no. 3; verse no. 121, stanza no. 2, verse no. 196, stanza no. 1 etc.] (9).

Lord Rāma's Benevolence & Compassion

(152)

राम भलाई आपनी भल कियो न काको।
 जुग जुग जानकिनाथको जग जागत साको॥1॥
 ब्रह्मादिक बिनती करी कहि दुख बसुधाको।
 रबिकुल-कैरव-चंद भो आनंद-सुधाको॥2॥
 कौसिक गरत तुषार ज्यों तकि तेज तियाको।
 प्रभु अनहित हित को दियो फल कोप कृपाको॥3॥
 हस्यो पाप आप जाइकै संताप सिलाको।
 सोच-मगन काढ्यो सही साहिब मिथिलाको॥4॥
 रोष-रासि भृगुपति धनी अहमिति ममताको।
 चितवन भाजन करि लियो उपसम समताको॥5॥
 मुदित मानि आयसु चले बन मातु-पिताको।
 धमर-धुरंधर धीरधुर गुन-सील-जिता को?॥6॥
 गुह गरीब गतग्याति हू जेहि जिउ न भखा को?।
 पायो पावन प्रेम तें सनमान सखाको॥7॥
 सदगति सबरी गीधकी सादर करता को?।
 सोच-सीव सुग्रीवके संकट-हरता को?॥8॥
 राखि बिभीषनको सकै अस काल-गहा/तेहि काल कहाँ को?।
 आज बिराजत राज है दसकंठ जहाँको॥9॥
 बालिस बासी अवधको बूझिये न खाको।
 सो पाँवर पहुँचो तहाँ जहाँ मुनि-मन थाको॥10॥
 गति न लहै राम-नामसों बिधि सो सिरजा को?।
 सुमिरत कहत प्रचारि कै बल्लभ गिरिजाको॥11॥
 अकनि अजामिल की कथा सानंद न भा को?।
 नाम लेत कलिकालहू हरिपुरहिं न गा को?॥12॥
 राम-नाम-महिमा करै काम-भूरुह आको।
 साखी बेद पुरान हैं तुलसी-तन ताको॥13॥

(152)

rāma bhalā'ī āpanī bhala kiyō na kākō.
 juga juga jānakināthakō jaga jāgata sākō. 1.
 brahmādika binatī karī kahi dukha basudhākō.
 rabikula-kairava-canda bhō ānanda-sudhākō. 2.
 kausika garata tuṣāra jyōm taki tēja tiyākō.
 prabhu anahita hita kō diyō phala kōpa kṛpākō. 3.
 haryō pāpa āpa jā'ikai santāpa silākō.
 sōca-magana kāḍhyō sahī sāhiba mithilākō. 4.

rōṣa-rāsi bhṛgupati dhanī ahamiti mamatākō.
 citavana bhājana kari liyō upasama samatākō. 5.
 mudita māni āyasu calē bana mātu-pitākō.
 dhamara-dhurandhara dhīradhura guna-sīla-jitā kō?. 6.
 guha garība gatagyāti hū jēhi ji'u na bhakhā kō?.
 pāyō pāvana prēma tēm sanamāna sakhākō. 7.
 sadagati sabarī gīdhakī sādara karatā kō?.
 sōca-sīnva sugrīvākē saṅkaṭa-haratā kō?. 8.
 rākhi bibhīṣanakō sakai asa kāla-gahā/tēhi kāla kahām kō?.
 āja birājata rāja hai dasakaṇṭha jahām kō. 9.
 bālisa bāsī avadhakō būjhiyē na khākō.
 sō pāmvara pahumcō tahām jahām muni-mana thākō. 10.
 gati na lahai rāma-nāmasōm bidhi sō sirajā kō?.
 sumirata kahata pracāri kai ballabha girijākō. 11.
 akani ajāmila kī kathā sānanda na bhā kō?.
 nāma lēta kalikālahū haripurahim na gā kō?. 12.
 rāma-nāma-mahimā karai kāma-bhūruha ākō.
 sākhi bēda purāna haiṁ tulasī-tana tākō. 13.

Verse no. 152—Whom has Lord Sri Ram not blessed and graced with goodness, welfare, good luck, munificence and benevolence as this is the inherent nature and a habit of the merciful Lord (rāma bhalāī āpanī bhala kiyō na kākō)?

Indeed and in all sooth, this innate and gracious nature and habit of Jankinath (i.e. Lord Sri Ram who is the dear husband of Janki or Sita) is famous in this world since ages and time immemorial (juga juga jānakināthakō jaga jāgata sākō) (1).

[Now, in the following stanzas, Tulsidas lists many such instances that go to prove that Lord Ram is selfless in extending his divine grace and mercy upon those who are lowly and humble, and there is not one creature who did not benefit from the Lord's nature of showing undiluted love for his devotees as well as those who come to seek his refuge and protection.]

When Brahma (the creator) and other Gods had prayed and told Lord Sri Ram about the miseries and torments being suffered by the Mother Earth (brahmādika binatī karī kahi dukha basudhākō), then (to remove the burden of the Earth and kill her tormentors, the Demons) the Lord—who was like a moon to make the lily-like Solar race bloom, and who is like nectar or Amrit (an elixir of eternal life) which provides happiness and joy to the inhabitants of the earth—manifested himself (as a human being in the Solar race, in the family of the King of Ayodhya as a prince by the name of Ram) (rabikula-kairava-canda bhō ānanda-sudhākō)¹.

[¹This story is narrated in Tulsidas' epic book "Ram Charit Manas", in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 176—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 187. Briefly, the demons had unleashed a reign of terror on the earth and the heaven. Unable to bear it any longer, mother Earth and the Gods approached Lord Vishnu to remove the burden of these cruel demons. The Lord promised them that he would himself descend upon the earth as a human being and

kill the demons. Thus Lord Ram was born; he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is the cosmic Lord of this world.

Refer also to verse no. 134, stanza no. 2 herein above in this book Vinai Patrika.] (2).

Sage Vishwamitra used to be so affright at the sight of the fierce demoness known as Taadka that he would tremble and hide from sight as soon as he saw her (*kausika taki tēja tiyākō*) just like frost that disappears at the first sign of heat, so terrified he was of her (*garata tuṣāra jyōm*).

When Lord Ram observed this pitiful condition of the sage and realised his predicament, he showed his anger at her by killing her, but even this anger of the Lord proved to be a sweet fruit for this demoness (because instead of punishing her by condemning her to hell, the merciful Lord blessed her soul with liberation and deliverance from this world (*prabhu anahita hita kō diyō phala kōpa kṛpākō*)².

[²Lord Ram had shown extreme compassion and kindness to the demoness Taadka in the garb of anger because she had no chance ever to find deliverance from her evil life if it had not been for the Lord who blessed her by liberating her soul from the cage of the evil body of a demoness that she had got due to her past deeds. If the Lord hadn't killed her, she would have died some day and become another demoness in her next birth as her whole current life would have been spent in committing evil and atrocious deeds.

The story in brief is that Taadka had been constantly defiling Viswamitra's fire sacrifice. To get rid of her, the sage brought Sri Ram to stand guard and protect his rituals. The demoness was killed by the Lord when she attacked him. The anger showed by Lord Ram at Taadka was superficial, for the Lord never became angry at anyone. As was Lord Sri Ram's wont and style, he slayed all the demons showing external anger and wrath at them, but internally the Lord was never spiteful or vengeful, for he was an ocean of mercy and his purpose in killing all these demons was two fold—one was to free the earth and its inhabitants from their terror, and the other was to ensure that these demons did not become demons again in their next birth so this vicious cycle would come to an end. All the demons slayed by the Lord got instant emancipation and deliverance from their evil and sinful bodies.

The story of Vishwamitra's fire sacrifice being defiled by the demons, and the slaying of Taadka and other demons by Lord Ram is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 206—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 210.

It is to be noted that the fact that Lord Ram bestowed emancipation and salvation upon Taadka's soul is specifically mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 209.] (3).

He (Lord Ram) went himself to remove the sins and its accompanying sorrows and miseries that had been tormenting the 'stone' by providing liberation and deliverance to it from its curse (*haryō pāpa āpa jā'ikai santāpa silākō*).

[This 'stone' was actually a lady named Ahilya, the chaste wife of sage Gautam, who had been turned into a stone due to some unfortunate curse upon her.]³

After that, the Lord had gone and extricated the king of Mithila (i.e. king Janak, the father of Sita, the Lord's wife) who was overwhelmed with extreme distress, worries and sorrows as if he was about to get drowned in an ocean of abject despair and sorrows (*sōca-magana kāḍhyō sahī sāhiba mithilākō*).

[King Janak was utterly dismayed and distraught when he found that his daughter Sita would have to remain unmarried for life because no one had been able to meet the condition for her marriage set by him—which was to break the sturdy bow of Lord Shiva. Lord Ram had then broken the bow and resolved the stalemate over Sita's fate when he found that Janak was on the brink of emotional collapse, and had thereby virtually saved him from drowning in an ocean of grief and miseries.]⁴

[³Refer note appended to verse no. 43, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 12 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.

⁴This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 263.] (4).

Sage Parashuram (known as “Bhrigupati” as he belonged to the line of sages descending from sage Bhrigu) was a virtual bundle of anger, wrath, malice and spite (i.e. he was full of these traits) (*rōṣa-rāsi bhrigupati*), and rich in the negative virtues of haughtiness and arrogance as well as attachments with things that a sage of his stature ought to have completely neglected or be dispassionate towards (*dhanī ahamiti mamatākō*).

[He was very angry and wrathful by nature; he was anger and malice personified. He was extremely haughty and very boastful of his strength and invincibility, and he never regretted about the negative characters in him but rather boasted of them. He was attached to such inanimate object as the bow, the breaking of which by Lord Ram at Janakpur had incited extreme indignation in him that he had rushed to punish the person who had broken the bow. He was famed for wreaking vengeance upon those whom he thought opposed him, and for no apparent rhyme or reason would straightaway go and kill them without even giving them a chance to explain or ask for forgiveness.]

Even he was calmed down and turned into someone who was pious and full of equanimity and tolerance as soon as the Lord (Ram) glanced at him meaningfully with his divine sight (*citavana bhājana kari liyō upasama samatākō*)⁵.

[⁵Refer note appended to verse no. 100, stanza no. 5 of this book Vinai Patrika. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 285.] (5).

You (Lord Sri Ram) had gone to the forest very cheerfully and willingly (i.e. without harbouring any sort of malice, ill-will, anger, regret, frustration, vengefulness or spite in your heart) on the orders of your mother (Kaikeyi) and father (Dasrath) (*mudita māni āyasu calē bana mātu-pitākō*).

[To wit, you did not feel sad and angry at all when they had ordered you to go to the forest for no fault of yours, but because it was a selfish demand of your step-mother Kaikeyi who wanted to make her own son Bharat the prince regent of the kingdom by superseding your right to the throne. You had gone to the forest cheerfully on their asking you to do so, without any resistance and taking personal offence.]⁶

Who is more steeped and better versed in the principles of righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct than you are; who practices better the noble virtues of tolerance, forgiveness, forbearance, fortitude and courage in the face of adversities and ill-fortunes than you do; who is more virtuous and of a better character

and noble bearing than you are; who has more civility, courteousness, dignity and decency of behaviour as compared to you (*dhamara-dhurandhara dhīradhura guna-sīla-jitā kō*)? [Verily and forsooth, there is not a single example in this world of anyone who can match you in virtuousness and excellence of character and nature.]

[⁶This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 23—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 42; Doha no. 79 along with Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes it; and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 81.

Refer also to verse no. 100, stanza no. 6 of this book Vinai Patrika in this context.] (6).

The lowly, the low-caste and the poor Guha-Nishad (of the boatman community), who was like a savage in the sense that he had eaten the meat of all types of creatures throughout his life (*guha garība gatagyāti hū jēhi ji'u na bhakhā kō*)—even he had received respect from Lord Ram that befitted a close friend of the Lord due to the purity of his affection, love and devotion for the latter (*pāyō pāvana prēma tēm sanamāna sakhākō*)⁷.

[⁷Refer also to verse no. 106, stanza no. 2, as well as in verse no. 134, stanza no. 4 of this book Vinai Patrika.

The boatman known as Guha belonged to the Nishad community who eat meat, and are of a low caste as well as poor. He had taken Lord Ram across the river Ganges when the Lord was on his way to the forest, and he had not accepted any fare from the Lord for taking him across. The Lord felt so obliged that he promised Guha a lifetime of friendship. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 20.] (7).

Who is the one who gave salvation and emancipation, with due respect and dignity, to the soul of (the most lowly and out-caste, tribal woman named) Sabari and the vulture (named Jatau) (*sadagati sabarī gīdhakī sādara karatā kō*)?

[Both Sabari and Jatau had no chance of ever getting salvation and emancipation for themselves if Lord Ram had not been kind upon them. They had been blessed with a special privilege by the Lord inasmuch as the Lord performed their last rites with his own hands, a glory that was not available even to king Dasrath who was the worldly father of Lord Ram, and neither to Kaushalya who was his worldly mother. The Lord had performed the last rites of Sabari as he would have done for his own mother, and of Jatau as he would have done for his own father, inspite of the fact that the former was a lowly tribal woman and the latter was a vulture by birth.]⁸

And who is the one who removed the extreme miseries and sorrows from which Sugriv was suffering (*sōca-sīnva sugrīvakē saṅkaṭa-haratā kō*)?

[Sugriv was the younger brother of Baali, the monkey king of the kingdom of Kishkindha. Due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers, Sugriv was beaten mercilessly by Baali and forced into exile on a remote mountain where he lived in grief and fear of death from his own brother. Lord Ram had befriended Sugriv and had killed his tormentor Baali, thereby not only restoring his lost esteem but also anointing him on the throne of Kishkindha as its sovereign.]⁹

[⁸Refer also to verse no. 106, stanza no. 2 (Sabari), and verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 (Jatau), as well as in verse no. 134, stanza no. 4, and verse no. 162, stanza no. 2 of this book Vinai Patrika.

Their stories are narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36 (Sabari); and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 118 that precedes Doha no. 30—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33.

⁹Refer verse no. 134, stanza no. 5 of this book Vinai Patrika. The story of Sugriv is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 11.] (8).

Who could have had the temerity, the audacity and the courage to keep Vibhishan (who had been kicked out by the ferocious demon king of Lanka, Ravana) in his shelter and offer him refuge (at the cost of offending, enraging and antagonising such a ferocious and invincible enemy as Ravana) (*rākhi bibhīṣanakō sakai asa kāla-gahā/tēhi kāla kahām̐ kō*)?

[When he was kicked out of Lanka, Vibhishan approached Lord Ram to seek refuge with him. The Lord knew that by accepting him he would definitely offend Ravana, and this was a very risky proposition because the Lord's wife Sita was in Ravana's captivity, and there was a great chance of Ravana avenging Lord Ram's acceptance of Vibhishan by severely tormenting Sita. But the Lord decided that it was more important for him to provide protection to someone who had come to him seeking refuge in time of utter distress, and so the Lord willingly accepted Vibhishan without giving a second thought to it. Say, at the time of his utter helplessness and distress, whom could Vibhishan turn to for succour and solace except Lord Sri Ram? For Vibhishan knew very well the nature of the Lord that he would go to any length to help those who are in distress and pray to the Lord for mercy.]

The same humiliated and disenfranchised Vibhishan later on became a king of the kingdom of Lanka from where Ravana had unceremoniously ejected or kicked him out, and he rules over it even today (*āja birājata rāja hai dasakaṇṭha jahām̐ kō*).

[To wit, surely no one can be as gracious and kind as Lord Ram who gave freedom from all grief and sufferance to Vibhishan. The Lord is so obliging and graceful that when he found that injustice had been done to Vibhishan by his elder brother Ravana who had publicly humiliated him and kicked him out of the kingdom in utter shame and disgrace, the Lord decided to restore the honour of Vibhishan and give him his rightful dues. The Lord did not hesitate to accept Vibhishan when he came seeking refuge with the Lord, even if it meant severely offending and confronting Ravana for giving shelter to a person whom he had so angrily ejected from his own kingdom.]¹⁰

[¹⁰The cases of Sugriv and Vibhishan are both similar in this respect. Both were thrown out of their respective kingdoms by their own elder brothers, Baali and Ravana respectively, who were strong and mighty in their own right. Lord Ram had accepted both of them as his friend, and had restored their lost honour and dignity by eliminating their tormentors and anointing them to the respective thrones of their kingdoms.]

With reference to Vibhishan, see verse no. 78, stanza no. 5, and verse no. 134, stanza no. 5 herein above in this book Vinai Patrika.

This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.] (9).

The stupid and dumb tattler-washerman (Dhobi) of Ayodhya (who had cast aspersions on the character of Sita that resulted in Sri Ram abandoning her and sending her into

exile in the hermitage of sage Valmiki for the rest of her life) (bāliśa bāśi avadhakō), who did not have even an iota of wisdom, thoughtfulness and scruples in him, nor any sense of propriety and judgement (būjhiyē na khākō)—even that sinful, vile, stupid and wicked man (sō pāmvara) was given that exalted state of existence which is difficult even for the mind of hermits and sages to attain (i.e. he obtained emancipation and salvation by the grace of Lord Ram) (pahumcō tahām jaham muni-mana thākō)¹¹.

[¹¹This washerman had made disparaging remarks against the character of Sita and Lord Ram while admonishing his own wife over some incident. When the Lord heard of it, then instead of punishing this wicked fellow of low intellect, he had abandoned his own chaste wife Sita and sent her to forest exile for the rest of her life. This showed that the Lord did not want to cause any distress to the subjects of his kingdom even if it meant suffering personally.

This story is narrated in the “Adhyatma Ramayan” of sage Veda Vyas, in its Uttar Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 47—63.] (10).

Whom has the creator Brahma made in this world who could not claim his right to liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of his soul after saying the holy and divine name of Lord Sri Ram (gati na lahai rāma-nāmasōm bidhi sō sirajā kō)?¹²

Even Lord Shiva, who is the beloved consort of goddess Parvati who is the daughter of the King of Mountains (ballabha girijākō), constantly remembers this divine and holy name of Lord Sri Ram himself, and he propagates it by preaching it to others and advising them to do the same (sumirata kahata pracāri kai)¹³.

[¹²The glory and divinity as well as the tremendous spiritual value and powers of Lord Ram’s holy name are enumerated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28.

¹³Refer also to verse no. 108, stanza no. 2 of this book Vinai Patrika in this context.] (11).

Who has not become emotionally reassured of protection and felt extremely delighted and glad upon hearing the fate of Ajamil (who obtained freedom from going to hell just because he had uttered the holy name of the Lord, i.e. ‘Narayan’, at the time of his death) (akani ajāmila kī kathā sānanda na bhā kō)?¹⁴

[To wit, when one hears that Ajamil had been protected by the Lord from extreme torture at the hands of the messengers of Yam, the God of hell and death, who had come to drag him to hell because he had no spiritual merit to his credit in his life, just because he had called out the holy name ‘Narayan’ (which happened to be one of the many names of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of Lord Ram) in utter distress and fear, one feels very very happy and reassured that if this can be the case of Ajamil then the Lord’s holy name would also protect one from going to hell and be subjected to uncountable horrors. What more would anyone want; which more easy way could be found out from the gravest of fears and torments?]

By taking Lord Sri Ram’s holy name, who has not gone to the supreme and the most exalted abode of the Lord (i.e. to heaven to find peace and happiness) even in this time of the Kaliyug (the present age that is marked by moral turpitude, wickedness, evil, sins and misdeeds that would normally block all passage to heaven,

and condemn a creature to suffering in hell) (nāma lēta kalikālahū haripurahim na gā kō)?¹⁵

[¹⁴Refer to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika and the note appended to it in this context.

¹⁵The magical spiritual effects of Lord Ram's holy name and its ability to provide a blanket protection from all evil effects of Kaliyug that affect a creature and drags him in the endless cycle of spiritual miseries and sufferings, providing him with peace, bliss and happiness on the one hand, and liberation and deliverance of his soul on the other hand, has been enumerated in Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—right upto Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28.] (12).

The greatness, the mystical powers, the immensity of glory, the magical influence and the grand reputation that the holy and divine name of Lord Sri Ram has (rāma-nāma-mahimā) are so stupendous and astounding that they can convert a worthless 'Aak' tree (swallow-wort tree) into a Kalpa Tree (which is the all wishfulfilling celestial tree of the Gods) (karai kāmā-bhūruha ākō)—the Vedas and the Purans bear witness to it (sākhī bēda purāna haim).

Tulsidas says that if someone still doesn't believe it or has doubts about the effectiveness and powers of Lord Ram's holy name, then let him look at Tulsidas (tulasī-tana tākō)¹⁶.

[¹⁶To wit, if anyone doubts that Lord Ram's holy name has this potential, then he should see the example of Tulsidas and observe how miserable and distressed he was earlier in his life, and how respected and venerated he has now become in the society once he had taken shelter of Lord Ram and began to repeat the Lord's holy name. All miseries of Tulsidas vanished once and for all when he chose this blessed path.] (13).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse. There are countless verses that reflect the same idea as expressed in this verse. Some of the other such verses are nos. 94, 99—108, 134 etc.]

The Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma as the Best of all the Lords

(153)

मेरे रावरियै गति है रघुपति बलि जाउँ ।
 निलज नीच निरधन निरगुन कहँ, जग दूसरो न ठाकुर ठाउँ ।।1।।
 हैं घर घर बहु भरे सुसाहिब, सूझत सबनि आपनो दाउँ ।
 बानर-बंधु बिभीषन-हितु बिनु, कोसलपाल कहँ न समाउँ ।।2।।
 प्रनतारति-भंजन जन-रंजन, सरनागत पबि-पंजर नाउँ ।
 कीजै दास दासतुलसी अब, कृपासिंधु बिनु मोल बिकाउँ ।।3।।

(153)

mērē rāvariyaī gati hai raghupati bali jā'um̐.
 nilaja nīca niradhana niraguna kaham̐, jaga dūsarō na ṭhākura ṭhā'um̐. 1.
 haiṁ ghara ghara bahu bharē susāhiba, sūjhata sabani āpanō dā'um̐.
 bānara-bandhu bibhīṣana-hitu binu, kōsalapāla kahūṁ na samā'um̐. 2.
 pranatārati-bhañjana jana-ṛañjana, saranāgata pabi-panjara nā'um̐.
 kījai dāsa dāsatulasī aba, kṛpāsindhu binu mōla bikā'um̐. 3.

Verse no. 153—Oh Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram)! I earnestly and humbly offer and submit myself before you, and declare that I have only the Lord's holy feet as my sole refuge and shelter and destination in life (mērē rāvariyaī gati hai bali jā'um̐).

For a worthless fellow like me who is shameless, mean, lowly, impoverished, character-less and lacking in any worthwhile virtues (nilaja nīca niradhana niraguna kaham̐), there is no Lord anywhere in this world except you (jaga dūsarō na ṭhākura) where I can go and seek shelter in this world; there is no other destination or habitat for me except with you (na ṭhā'um̐) (1).

Though each household has someone as its head whom the members of the family regard as being good and efficient in living upto his duties and responsibilities (haiṁ ghara ghara bahu bharē susāhiba), but I have concluded that all such heads of households (i.e. all the lords and masters in this world) are selfish to some extent inasmuch as they would take care of their own interests, privileges and honours first and foremost before they take into consideration or pay attention to the interests of other members of their households (sūjhata sabani āpanō dā'um̐)¹.

I have decided for myself that there is no Lord who is comparable to Lord Ram, the Lord of Kaushal (the kingdom of Ayodhya), in having the grand virtue of selflessness and a desire to help others without having any vested interest in doing so (kōsalapāla kahūṁ na samā'um̐). The obvious reason for my conviction is that the Lord had acted in a selfless way by helping a monkey (Sugriv) as well as Vibhishan at a time when they were facing dire circumstances, and were feeling utterly helpless and hapless, without any obligation or expecting anything in return for the favour the Lord extended to them (bānara-bandhu bibhīṣana-hitu binu)².

[¹To wit, a head of a family or the lord of the household first ensures that his own position is secure and that his personal needs are looked after well on a priority basis before he would pay attention to the welfare of other members of the family or the household. If by chance he feels someone in the family neglects him, it is but natural that he would not like this particular person or shun him, and instead would prefer to show his favour on someone in the same family who cares for him, who looks after him well and obeys him even if this may seem being biased towards a particular member of the family and may kindle jealousy and ill-will amongst the members of the family. 'Everyone is selfish': refer verse no. 163, stanza no. 2 herein below in this book Vinai Patrika.

²The reason is obvious and apparent: Lord Ram had whole-heartedly helped Sugriv to get back his honour at a time when the latter was in such a miserable condition after having been kicked out of the kingdom of Kishkindha by his over-jealous elder brother Baali that the Lord could not possibly have expected anything in return from Sugriv for this favour.

Similarly, when Lord Ram accepted Vibhishan and provided him with refuge and protection after he was dishonourably kicked out of the kingdom of Lanka by his elder brother Ravana, Vibhishan was completely resourceless, and so the Lord could not have possibly hoped or expected to gain anything by being kind to Vibhishan. On the other hand, there was the great risk of antagonising Ravana who could have taken revenge on Lord Ram by severely tormenting his wife Sita who was still in Ravana's captivity.

So this goes to prove that Lord Ram is a selfless benefactor and a benevolent Lord who gives help, succour, solace, protection, shelter and refuge to the humblest and the meekest of creatures with full knowledge that he can't expect anything in return as a gift or tribute from the latter for the help and favour extended to them by the Lord.

Tulsidas stresses that while every single individual in this world is selfish to some extent, Lord Ram is the only one who isn't. Lord Ram would not accept someone as the latter may be of some use or interest to him, that the latter would serve him in any way or the other, but the Lord accepts everyone who comes to him just because it is his natural habit and he loves everyone equally in this world. The Lord overlooks his personal interests and conveniences to ensure that the creature who has come to him in distress, expecting some relief from the Lord, gets more than what he had expected and all his wants and desires are satisfied to the fullest. And the Lord does not want any credit or any sort of return for this largesse of his!] (2).

Oh Lord (Sri Ram)! You are an eliminator of the sufferings of those who are subjected to miseries, sorrows, troubles and tribulations, and have surrendered before you to seek shelter and refuge (*pranatārati-bhanjana*), and at the same time you are a bestower of delight, joy and happiness to your devotees (*jana-ranjana*).

For those who have taken shelter at your holy feet, your name is equivalent to a protective cage which is as strong as Bajra (*saranāgata pabi-panjara nā'umṣabi-panjara*)³. [To wit, as soon as your devotees take your name, they get the protective cover of a strong, unbreakable and secure cage that protects them from all sides. So they feel assured and fearless, which makes them happy and contented.]

Hence, oh an ocean of mercy and compassion (*krpāsindhu*), now by all means you must make this Tulsidas as your humble, faithful and loyal servant (or devotee) (*kījai dāsa dāsatulasī aba*).

Lord, I want to sell myself to you without a price (*binu mōla bikā'um*)! [To wit, I don't ask anything in return from you for accepting me as your dear and loyal devotee. I will serve you and be your obedient servant all my life, and I assure and promise you that I don't expect anything or any favour from you in return.]

[³The "Bajra" is the strongest material in existence. Here Tulsidas means that if one comes and takes the shelter of Lord Ram and seeks the Lord's protection, then no harm can ever come to him from any quarter. He would feel as secure as a person who is inside a room which is surrounded by fortified steel walls. As soon as the person's detractors or enemies hear that he has taken shelter with Lord Ram, no matter how strong and powerful they may be, they would not dare to harm him. Say, where else can one be so certain of his safety and well-being.

Besides this, the Lord would not let the person who has surrendered before him feel lowly, servile, compelled, humiliated and embarrassed in anyway. The Lord will see to it that such a person's dignity and honour are maintained at all levels of existence. And since this person has nowhere to go now, the Lord ensures that his comforts and well-being are well taken care of. Where else would one come across such a gracious, kind, loving, understanding, benevolent, charitable and magnanimous Lord like Lord Ram is?

The following verse nos. 154 and 157 also expand upon this theme.] (3).

The Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma as the Best of all the Lords

(154)

देव! दूसरो कौन दीनको दयालु ।
 सीलनिधान सुजान—सिरोमनि, सरनागत—प्रिय प्रनत—पालु ।।1।।
 को समरथ सरबग्य सकल प्रभु, सिव—सनेह—मानस मरालु ।
 को साहिब किये मीत प्रीतिबस खग निसिचर कपि भील भालु ।।2।।
 नाथ हाथ माया—प्रपंच सब, जीव—दोष—गुन—करम—कालु ।
 तुलसिदास भलो पोच रावरो, नेकु निरखि कीजिये निहालु ।।3।।

(154)

dēva! dūsarō kauna dīnakō dayālu.
 sīlanidhāna sujāna-sirōmani, saranāgata-priya pranata-pālu. 1.
 kō samaratha sarabagya sakala prabhu, siva-sanēha-mānasa marālu.
 kō sāhiba kiye mīta prītibasa khaga nīsicara kapi bhīla bhālu. 2.
 nātha hātha māyā-prapañca saba, jīva-dōṣa-guna-karama-kālu.
 tulasidāsa bhalō pōca rāvarō, nēku nirakhi kījiyē nihālu. 3.

Verse no. 154—Oh Lord (dēva—i.e. Lord Ram)! Who else is there except you who would show so much compassion, mercy, grace and kindness on those who are miserable, lowly, poor and distressed as much as you do (dūsarō kauna dīnakō dayālu)?

You are a treasury of auspicious characters, excellent virtues and noble temperament (sīlanidhāna); you are the most exalted and highly skilled amongst those who are wise and enlightened and knowledgeable (sujāna-sirōmani); you are the Lord who loves those who have surrendered at your holy feet and taken shelter and refuge there (or—you are the beloved, the most favoured and the most sought-after Lord for all those who seek refuge and shelter somewhere: “saranāgata-priya”); and you are a protector and benefactor of those who have already surrendered before you, have taken shelter with you, and are dependant upon you (pranata-pālu) (1).

Oh Lord (prabhu)! Say, who is more capable and competent than you are (kō samaratha)? [This statement gives the reason for the confidence that Tulsidas has in the Lord for what has been said of him in stanza no. 1 above.]

You are the all-knowing and omniscient Supreme Lord of this creation (consisting of both the animate as well as the inanimate aspects of existence) (sarabagya sakala prabhu)¹.

You are like a graceful Swan which floats in the Mansarovar lake of love and affection in the heart of Lord Shiva (siva-sanēha-mānasa marālu)².

Who else is such a gracious, benevolent and obliging Lord who would make humble creatures such as a bird (Jatau, Kaghbhusund), a demon (Vibhishan), a monkey (Sugriv), a Bhil (Guha-Nishad) and a bear (Jamwant) as his friends out of love and affection for them (kō sāhiba kiyē mīta prītibasa khaga nisicara kapi bhīla bhālu)³?

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 23; (ii) Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 51; (b) Aranya Kand—(iii) Chanda line no. 17-18 that precede Doha no. 4; (c) Lanka Kand, Chanda line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 111.

²(a) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 11; Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 341; and (b) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 29, stanza no. 3.

³There are umpteen numbers of verses in this book ‘Vinai Patrika’ that refer to this: viz. verse nos. 25, 43, 57, 78, 99, 106, 134, 152 etc. to cite a few examples.] (2).

Oh Lord (nātha)! All the varieties of tricks that ‘Maya’ (the power that creates delusions and ignorance) plays upon an individual (māyā-prapañca saba), as well as the individual creature’s own faults, defects and shortcomings, his own nature, virtues, thoughts and character, the deeds that he does and the influence of prevailing circumstances and time upon him (jīva-dōṣa-guna-karama-kālu)—verily, all these factors collectively are your Lordship’s hands, i.e. they are all under your control and command, it is you who can control, modify and alter them (nātha hātha).

[To wit, though it is true that every living being is shackled by these factors, that no one can escape their snare and being influenced by them, but at the same time it is also true that the devotees of Lord Ram can overcome these compulsions, they can free themselves from these fetters and the problems arising from them. This is because the Lord ensures that these factors do not torment his devotees and unnecessarily cause hurdle in his path. This means that these factors are controlled by the Lord and they can’t disobey his commands, as he is the Supreme Lord and the ultimate Authority in this creation.]⁴

Let there be no doubt about it that this Tulsidas, whether he is good and righteous or evil and bad, belongs to your Lordship (tulasidāsa bhalō pōca rāvarō). Therefore, you must just have a compassionate and kind glance at him (nēku nirakhi), and make him exult in ecstasy, make him extremely delighted and happy by showing your grace and kindness upon him by this simple gesture of a glance (kījiyē nihālu).

[⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand—(i) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 44; (ii) Doha no. 58; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 53;

(iv) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 60; (v) Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 114; (vi) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 117 etc.] (3).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

The Glory of Lord Rāma's Holy name

Rāga Sāraṅga

(155)

बिस्वास एक राम—नामको ।
मानत नहिं परतीति अनत ऐसोइ सुभाव मन बामको ।।1।।
पढ़िबो पश्यो न छठी छ मत रिगु जजुर अथर्वन सामको ।
व्रत तीरथ तप सुनि सहमत पचि मरै करै तन छाम को? ।।2।।
करम—जाल कलिकाल कठिन आधीन सुसाधित दामको ।
ग्यान बिराग जोग जप तप, भय लोभ मोह कोह कामको ।।3।।
सब दिन सब लायक भव गायक रघुनायक गुन—ग्रामको ।
बैठे नाम—कामतरु—तर डर कौन घोर घन घामको ।।4।।
को जानै को जैहे जमपुर को सुरपुर पर—धामको ।
तुलसिहिं बहुत भलो लागत जग जीवन रामगुलामको ।।5।।

(155)

bisvāsa ēka rāma-nāmakō.
mānata nahim paratīti anata aisō'i subhāva mana bāmakō. 1.
paḍhibō paryō na chaṭhī cha mata rigu jajura atharvana sāmākō.
brata tīratha tapa suni sahamata paci marai karai tana chāma kō?. 2.
karama-jāla kalikāla kaṭhina ādhīna susādhita dāmakō.
gyāna birāga jōga japa tapa, bhaya lōbha mōha kōha kāmākō. 3.
saba dina saba lāyaka bhava gāyaka raghunāyaka guna-grāmākō.
baiṭhē nāma-kāmataru-tara ḍara kauna ghōra ghana ghāmākō. 4.
kō jānai kō jaiḥē jamapura kō surapura para-dhāmākō.
tulasihim bahuta bhalō lāgata jaga jīvana rāmagulāmākō. 5.

Verse no. 155—I have only one belief, only one faith and only one reliance—and it is in the holy name of Lord Ram (bisvāsa ēka rāma-nāmakō). [To wit, I believe in nothing else but Lord Ram's holy name; I have no faith in anything else except Lord Ram's holy name; I rely on nothing but Lord Ram's holy name. I am unequivocal in my beliefs and convictions. It is my only religion, and it is the result of all my observations.]

I declare that my Mana (mind and heart combine), which may be wretched, wicked, crooked and perverse, has howbeit made this firm resolution in this respect (as stated herein above), and it won't change its determination in any way for it

doesn't have any confidence and reliance on any other entity for its good and welfare (except in the holy name of the Lord) (**mānata nahim paratīti anata aisō'i subhāva mana bāmakō**). [To wit, though my Mana is otherwise dumb, fickle, wicked, evil, corrupt and pervert, but I praise it that it has taken one good and wise decision—and it is to firmly resolve that its only good and welfare lies in having faith in Lord Ram and his holy name. I congratulate my Mana for it!]

Study of the six Shastras (branches of the scriptures such as Nyaya, Vaishesik, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimansa, Vedant), and the four Vedas (primary scriptures) such as Rig, Yajur, Atharva and Sam is not destined in my destiny (i.e. I am not fortunate enough to have ever got a chance to read or study them) (**paḍhibō paryō na chaṭhī cha mata rigu jajura atharvana sāmako**), and my Mana is filled with fear and recoils when it even hears of such words as 'fastings, penances, religious vows and rituals, austerities, pilgrimage' etc. (**brata tīratha tapa suni sahamata**).

Who would die (i.e. suffer) by going through the rigours of these tough spiritual paths for whatever religious merit they purport to have, and spoil one's body (i.e. subjecting the body to hardships) by practicing their strict discipline, following their rigorous methods, and conforming to their stiff demands (with the threat of punishment and sufferings for failure to do so) (**paci marai karai tana chāma kō**)?¹

[¹To wit, I am so illiterate and dumb that neither have I studied any book nor have I practiced any meritorious deed in my life. In fact, I am scared stiff of even thinking of such virtuous deeds as doing penances, fasting, keeping of vows, doing religious rituals, and so on, what to say of actually doing them.

I abhor them; I am too lazy to do them. I have observed that all these paths are so rigorous and difficult that if I follow them then I will lose all the chances of enjoying the comforts, pleasures and joys of the world that I am accustomed to. Then there is no certainty of success. So I decided not to take the trouble at all.

I looked around and pondered on this matter for quite a while, and determined for myself that there is yet a very simple and easy path that I can follow, a path which would give me the same rewards or fruits that I can get by subjecting myself to the rigours and troubles that are incumbent in following the meritorious paths listed herein above. And this easy and the least troubling path was to have devotion and love for Lord Ram with a firm faith in the Lord's holy name—as this single path provides great spiritual rewards in all its glorious forms with any accompanying hassles.] (2).

In Kaliyug (the present age), doing meritorious deeds (such as Vedic rituals, fire and other religious sacrifices, giving charities and making donations, and other such meritorious deeds of religious nature) are like a complicated tangle as they are not only difficult to carry out with the limited resources one has but are also costly as they involve a lot of expenditure (**karama-jāla kalikāla kaṭhina ādhīna susādhita dāmakō**). [Unfortunately, I do not have such kind of surplus money that I can afford to bear such huge expenditure. So therefore, I am unable to do any kind of so-called 'Karma Kand'.]

Now as for the rest of the means and ways for attaining religious merit and spiritual reward—such as the path that requires Gyan (gaining truthful knowledge about spiritual matters), practicing of Vairagya (renunciation), of Yoga (meditation), of Japa (chanting of the Mantras), of Tapa (penances and austerities) etc. (**gyāna birāga jōga japa tapa**)—there is the constant fear that the effort invested into realising success through these paths would be subjected to interference and

disruption from such negative factors as Kaam (lust, desires, passions), Krodha (anger that leads to malice, discord and ill-will), Lobha (greed, avarice, covetousness), Moha (attachments, infatuation, a sense of belonging to perishable things) etc. (bhaya lōbha mōha kōha kāmako)².

[²Tulsidas avers that the many well-known paths that are usually prescribed by the scriptures for spiritual aspirants and seekers of bliss, happiness, peace, liberation, deliverance, emancipation, salvation and so on as listed in this verse are closed for him. He neither has the money nor the wherewithal to arrange for things needed for doing elaborate fire sacrifices and make charities that are part of this ritual, not is he fit and able to do other meritorious deeds such as having Vairagya, doing Yoga, Tapa, Japa etc.

Hence, for all practical purposes, these paths, no matter how glorious they may be, are closed for him.] (3).

Verily and in all sooth and without the least gainsay, in this mundane gross world of transmigration and its accompanying sufferings and pains, those who sing the divine stories and glories of Lord Sri Ram every day are the ones who are to be regarded as clever and wise in every possible way (saba dina saba lāyaka bhava gāyaka raghunāyaka guna-grāmako). [To wit, those who sing the glories of the Lord, those who have surrendered themselves to the Lord and have faith in him, they are the ones who are really wise and clever in this world—because they achieve their spiritual goals with the least effort, they do so most easily and conveniently, without exposing themselves to any botherations and hardships, and without the fear of failure and uncertainties.]

Those who are sitting under the shadow of the Kalpa-Tree (the all wish-fulling tree of heaven) symbolised by Lord Ram's holy name (baithē nāma-kāmataru-tara)—say, how and why should they be afraid of the huge dark clouds swirling over their heads, or of the harshness and glare of the rays of the sun that sizzles the world around them (ḍara kauna ghōra ghana ghāmako)?³

[³Here, the 'dark cloud' represents the darkness induced by ignorance, delusions, sins, vices etc. that torment a creature and act as spoil-sport in his spiritual path, pulling him down, making him stumble and get hurt, and ruining whatever efforts he may have made to attain lasting peace and happiness for himself.

The 'harsh and dazzling sunlight' refers to the countless charms and temptations arising from the material things and sense objects in this mundane gross world that seem so attractive but are ruinous for him in the long run. One sees water in the mirage formed in a desert under the glare the dazzling sun, and he is tempted to run for this water to quench his thirst. But this temptation leads to more misery as the heat of the desert saps the person of whatever energy he might have still left in him, bringing his ruin and death closer.

But for those who have taken the 'shelter' of Lord Ram's holy name, it is like standing under the protective shade of a huge, ever-green, fruit bearing tree with thick foliage and an extensive network of large branches. Such a man is protected from harsh weather—be it the thunder and lightening caused by fierce clouds overhead, or the heat caused by the harsh sun. Verily, the devotee of Lord Ram is free from all fears arising from any torment of the world; the torments and sins keep away from him.

Refer also to verse no. 156 herein below.] (4).

Who knows who would go to hell or to heaven, or attain the supreme abode of the soul from where there is no return (i.e. attain emancipation and salvation for themselves and become one with the supreme, absolute, formless cosmic Soul known as the Parmatma) (kō jānai kō jaiḥē jamapura kō surapura para-dhāmakō)?

Tulsidas says that as far as he is concerned he is not bothered with this debate, and would rather prefer to live in this world as a slave (i.e. an ardent, selfless, faithful and loyal devotee) of Lord Sri Ram, spending his time in ecstasy by serving, praying to, remembering, worshiping and honouring his beloved Lord, and singing his glories and praising him to the best of his abilities (tulasiḥim bahuta bhalō lāgata jaga jīvana rāmagulāmakō)⁴.

[⁴The message is clear. Tulsidas says that no one is certain what would happen after death, whether one would suffer by going to hell, or enjoy heaven, or even find beatitude and felicity by obtaining emancipation and salvation. If something is so uncertain, no wise person would bet on it. It is far better and sensible to opt of a choice where happiness and joy is obtainable in practical terms in the present world and real time. And the only way to achieve it is to take the path of Bhakti, the spiritual path of devotion, surrender, worship, love and affection for the Lord God. The easiest and simplest way to follow this path is to take recourse to the Lord's holy name as it is without any frills, complications, compulsions and formalities. Another parallel path that runs alongside it is to sing the glories of the Lord and remember him at all times of the day and night. These twin methods are the two sides of the same path, and they lead one to ecstasy and joy. Is it not wise to enjoy life and be happy right here while one lives in it rather than risk making sacrifices and suffer for an uncertain future no one knows anything about?] (5).

Lord Rāma's Name as an All Wish-fulfilling Tree (the 'Kāmataru')

(156)

कलि नाम कामतरु रामको ।
दलनिहार दारिद दुकाल दुख, दोष घोर घन घामको ।।1।।
नाम लेत दाहिनो होत मन, बाम बिधाता बामको ।
कहत मुनीस महेस महातम, उलटे सूधे नामको ।।2।।
भलो लोक-परलोक तासु जाके बल ललित-ललामको ।
तुलसी जग जानियत नामते सोच न कूच मुकामको ।।3।।

(156)

kali nāma kāmataru rāmakō.
dalanihāra dārida dukāla dukha, dōṣa ghōra ghana ghāmakō. 1.
nāma lēta dāhinō hōta maṇa, bāma bidhātā bāmakō.
kahata munīsa mahēsa mahātama, ulaṭē sūdhē nāmakō. 2.
bhalō lōka-paralōka tāsu jākē bala lalita-lalāmakō.
tulasī jaga jāniyata nāmatē sōca na kūca mukāmakō. 3.

Verse no. 156—In Kaliyug (the present age), Lord Sri Ram's holy name is like the only all wish-fulfilling tree known as the ‘kāmataru’¹ (kali nāma kāmataru rāmakō). It is because it helps one (i.e. the devotee) to overcome countless problems, miseries and pains associated with worldly existence that are like the torments caused by poverty, famine and drought (dalanihāra dārida dukāla dukha), or the sufferance caused to a person due to his own faults, shortcomings, evil nature and sins that scorch him like the heat of a blazing summer sun (dōṣa ghōra ghana ghāmakō)².

[¹Refer: Verse no. 155, stanza no. 4 herein above where this same idea with respect to the Kalpa Tree is stated.

²Tulsidas means that if a person takes the shelter of Lord Ram’s holy name, he would be freed from all worldly torments and miseries that rob him of his mental peace. Forsooth, the Lord’s holy name acts as a soothing balm for his agitated and ruffled spirit, and calms him down. It is like one finding shade under a huge tree after suffering for a lot under the heat of the blazing sun during the summer.] (1).

As soon as one takes the holy name of Lord Sri Ram, even a stern Creator's malevolent mind that had so far not thought of anything good for that person would immediately become friendly, benign and favourably inclined towards him (and start thinking for his good and welfare) (nāma lēta dāhinō hōta mana, bāma bidhātā bāmakō)³.

The Lord’s holy name is so unique and outstanding in its wonderful and magical spiritual powers that it has produced astounding spiritual results whether it is said in the right order or in the wrong order, i.e. whether it is repeated forwards or backwards (ulaṭē sūdhē nāmakō). [To wit, when the holy name “RAAM” is repeated over and over again, the result is that it sounds the same to the hearer as it forms a continuous flow of sound waves that merges both ends of the word into one single whole. It is like a wheel or a circle that has neither a beginning nor an end unlike a straight line that would start at a point and end at a point.]

For instance, sage Valmiki has established the glories and mystical powers of Lord Sri Ram's holy name by repeating it in the reverse order (as ‘Ma’ followed by ‘Ra’), while Shiva has established the magnificence and the stupendous mystical powers of the same holy name of the Lord by repeating it in the correct order (as ‘Ra’ followed by ‘Ma’) (kahata munīsa mahēsa mahātama)⁴.

[³Refer also to verse no. 70, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika where a similar idea is expressed. It simply means that the Creator who decides the fate and destiny of a creature would be compelled to rethink what to decide about the latter’s future if the creature takes the shelter of the protective umbrella of Lord Ram’s holy name so much so that even if previously he had been condemned by the Creator to suffer in his life, the course of life would change for good for him once he is blessed by the grace flowing naturally from the holy name of Lord Ram.

⁴Refer also to verse no. 151, stanza no. 7 (Valmiki), and verse no. 152, stanza no. 11 (Shiva) herein above in this book Vinai Patrika.

Valmiki had achieved sainthood by chanting the holy name of Lord Ram in the reverse order—because he was so sinful and vile that he refused to pronounce the Lord's name in the proper way. But nevertheless, the holy name’s stupendous good

effect was given to him though he had repeated it in the reverse order. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19.

Lord Shiva drank the fearsome poison that emerged at the time of the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons on the strength of Sri Ram's holy name, and instead of dying from this horrible poison that was extremely harsh and scorching, he became an exalted and venerated Great God in this creation who is honoured by the epithet 'Mahadeva' (which literally means a 'Great God'). Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. that precedes Doha no. 19.] (2).

Verily and in all sooth and without gainsay in the least, it is certain that those who have the support and the strength and the protection of Lord Sri Ram's powerful and glorious holy name, which has wonderful and extraordinary spiritual and temporal potentials, are assured of lasting happiness and joy both in this world (as long as they live) and in the world hereinafter (after they have left their mortal coils and died (bhalō lōka-paralōka tāsū jākē bala lalita-lalāmakō)⁵.

[⁵To wit, those who take the shelter and refuge of the holy name of Lord Ram can be reassured of sustained happiness and joy in this world as long as they live, and after their death they can be equally assured of eternal peace and emancipation for their soul.]

Oh Tulsidas! It is such a wonderful thought, and an extremely reassuring one at that, that by having the strength and support of Lord Sri Ram's holy name one would neither have any kind of fear or worry in leaving this world (i.e. in dying, which usually one is terrified of because of the horrors associated with the process of dying and the fate after that), nor of staying in this world (and facing its seemingly unsurmountable problems, because these problems would not harm him once he has got the Lord's support and protection) (tulasī jaga jāniyata nāmatē sōca na kūca mukāmakō)⁶.

[⁶To wit, for a person who has taken shelter and refuge with Lord Ram and obtained the protection of the Lord's holy name, it makes no difference to him in what circumstance he lives or would have to face in the future, because he is promised and reassured of happiness, joy, peace and liberation from worries and pain both in this world as well as in the world hereinafter. For such a blessed person, living and dying makes no difference because he gets to be established in supreme bliss, and his 'true self' becomes unaware of his surroundings, his body, or the 'false self', which is the one that experiences and pains associated with the gross mundane world.] (3).

The Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma as the Best of all the Lords

(157)

सेइये सुसाहिब राम सो ।

सुखद सुसील सुजान सूर सुचि, सुंदर कोटिक काम सो ॥१॥

सारद सेस साधु महिमा कहैं, गुनगन-गायक साम सो ।

सुमिरि सप्रेम नाम जासों रति चाहत चंद्र-ललाम सो ॥२॥

गमन बिदेस न लेस कलेसको, सकुचत सकृत प्रनाम सो ।

साखी ताको बिदित बिभीषन, बैठो है अबिचल धाम सो॥३॥
 टहल सहल जन महल—महल, जागत चारो जुग जाम सो।
 देखत दोष न खीझत, रीझत सुनि सेवक गुन—ग्राम सो॥४॥
 जाके भजे तिलोक—तिलक भये, त्रिजग जोनि तनु तामसो।
 तुलसी ऐसे प्रभुहिं भजै जो न ताहि बिधाता बाम सो॥५॥

(157)

sē'iyē susāhiba rāma sō.

sukhada susīla sujāna sūra suci, sundara kōṭika kāma sō. 1.
 sārada sēsa sādhu mahimā kahair̥ṃ, gunagana-gāyaka sāma sō.
 sumiri saprēma nāma jāsōṃ rati cāhata candra-lalāma sō. 2.
 gamana bidēsa na lēsa kalēsakō, sakucata sakṛta pranāma sō.
 sākhī tākō bidita bibhīṣana, baiṭhō hai abicala dhāma sō. 3.
 ṭahala sahala jana mahala-mahala, jāgata cārō juga jāma sō.
 dēkhata dōṣa na khījhata, rījhata suni sēvaka guna-grāma sō. 4.
 jākē bhajē tilōka-tilaka bhayē, trijaga jōni tanu tāmasō.
 tulasī aisē prabhuṃ bhajai jō na tāhi bidhātā bāma sō. 5.

Verse no. 157—[The ideas expressed in the present verse are similar to the ones in verse nos. 153 and 271 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

One would be wise and well-advised if he serves such a honourable, gracious and excellent Lord as Lord Sri Ram (sē'iyē susāhiba rāma sō) who is a bountiful giver of all happiness, delight and joy, who is very kind, virtuous, courteous, gentlemanly and civil, who is clever, wise and prudent, who is brave, courageous and valiant, who is faultless, immaculate, holy and pure (sukhada susīla sujāna sūra suci), and who is as beautiful, attractive, magnificent, radiant and charming as countless Kamdeos (cupids; the patron god of beauty and charm) (sundara kōṭika kāma sō)¹.

[¹When Lord Sri Ram is compared to the beauty of Kamdeo, the idea is that since no one would like to serve an ugly master who seems to instil fear and distress by his mere presence, this problem should not be a put-off or discouraging factor for the devotee who wishes to serve the Lord because he has an extremely charming appearance and a welcoming approach towards those who come to seek the Lord's grace and blessings, and desire to serve him.

Even a child or a flower which is ugly to look at does not appeal to anyone. If any house, food, friend, possession or anything else is ugly and repulsive in its appearance or cause distress to the senses, no one would like to spend time with them, what to talk of identifying one's self with such an ugly and repulsive entity.

But the physical attractiveness of the Lord is an indicator of the goodness and the excellence of Lord Ram's internal character and virtues that are reflected in the outwardly appearance of the Lord. Some of these wonderful characters and virtues of the Lord have been listed in this stanza itself.] (1).

Goddess Saraswati (the patron goddess of speech and knowledge), Lord Sesh-Nath (the cosmic thousand-hooded serpent who supports the earth on its hoods) and holy

Saints narrate the immensity of the fame and the glories of Lord Ram (sārada sēsa sādhu mahimā kahairṁ).

Even the Sam-Veda (which is famed for its lyrical hymns) sings of the Lord's virtues and noble characters (gunagana-gāyaka sāma sō).

Lord Shiva, who is an exalted and wise God and looks magnificent with the crescent moon adorning his head, remembers Lord Ram's holy name with great reverence, and wishes to have love for the Lord with much affection (sumiri saprēma nāma jāsōm rati cāhata candra-lalāma sō) (2).

He (Lord Ram) didn't have even a fleeting feeling of anger, malice, hatred, sorrow, lament, regret, remorse, ill-will or vengeance at the time of going to exile (in the forest on the orders of his father Dasrath, and due to a conspiracy hatched by his step-mother Kaikeyi) (gamana bidēsa na lēsa kalēsakō)².

If anyone bows his head even for once in front of the gracious Lord, he instantly becomes humbled and shy before that person and feels so obliged to him for this gesture of bowing of the head that the Lord wants to go out of his way to do something for him in return (sakucata sakṛta pranāma sō). [The Lord feels obliged to reciprocate the person's humble gesture of bowing his head before him by granting to that person more than what he expects from the Lord.]

In this regard, Vibhishan (the brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka) is a famous witness for it because after he had bowed his head before the Lord to surrender himself, the Lord had felt so grateful and obliged that he instantly anointed him as the ruler of the kingdom of Lanka where Vibhishan has been ruling even till this day (sākhī tākō bidita bibhīṣana, baiṭhō hai abicala dhāma sō)³.

[²Refer: Verse no. 152, stanza no. 6 of this book Vinai Patrika.

To wit, the Lord is so broad-hearted and tolerant that he harbours no malice and ill-will against even those who cause him immense troubles. For instance, when he was ordered to go to the forest by his step-mother Kaikeyi so that her son Bharat could ascend the throne of the kingdom of Ayodhya which otherwise rightfully belonged to Lord Ram as he was the eldest brother of the four, the Lord did not take umbrage or felt angry at all. He politely accepted that order and went to exile for fourteen long years where he had so suffer so much. Finally when he came back at the end of that period, he still held no ill-will or anger in his loving heart for anyone, for he met Kaikeyi and his brother Bharat with the same affection that he had for them in the beginning of the entire unfortunate episode as if nothing had happened.

[³Refer: Verse no. 152, stanza no. 9 of this book Vinai Patrika.

Vibhishan had come to seek refuge with Lord Ram when he was kicked out of Lanka by his elder brother Ravana, the king of demons, and had bowed his head before the Lord at that time. Lord Ram felt so obliged and grateful by this simple gesture that he wished to repay Vibhishan sufficiently. So the Lord immediately not only embraced him but also promised him his abiding friendship, besides anointing him as the future king of Lanka. The Lord rewarded Vibhishan so immensely that he gave him the entire kingdom of Lanka from which he was ousted.] (3).

It is so very easy and convenient to serve Lord Sri Ram. This is because the Lord is very tolerant and magnanimous in his outlook; he overlooks the countless shortcomings, faults and flaws of his devotees and followers; he never minds their

many commissions and omissions; and he is ready to forgive their errors, missteps, mischiefs and misdemeanours. (ṭahala sahala jana mahala-mahala).

He resides in the pitcher-like heart of all his devotees at all times, and he remains awake in all the four quarters of time (jāgata cārō juga jāma sō)⁴. [To wit, the Lord sits and guards his devotees from the inside of their subtle hearts at all times.]

The Lord does not get annoyed, angry, spiteful or indignant at his devotees in spite of watching all their faults, shortcomings, sins, wickedness, vices, misdemeanours and wrongful conduct (dēkhata dōṣa na khījhata). [This is because the Lord is very forgiving, very merciful and very loving by his nature.]

But when he hears the virtues and characters of his devotees being sung by others, he becomes exceedingly glad and rejoices at the goodness of his dependants being sung and acknowledged by others (rījhata suni sēvaka guna-grāma sō). [Like a loving parent who exults when he hears his ward being honoured in the society, Lord Ram too feels exhilarated when he hears that his devotee is being lauded by the world.]

[⁴This refers to the metaphysical concept that Lord Ram is a personified form of the Supreme Being representing the supreme Self which is the cosmic Consciousness at the macrocosmic level of existence, and as such he prevails in a universal manner in this entire living creation. At the same time, the Lord resides in the inner-self of each living being as an individual's own 'consciousness' known as his Atma which is nothing else but same pure cosmic Consciousness at the microcosmic level of existence.

This 'consciousness' or the Atma of the individual creature is always 'wide awake' in the sense that it is wise and enlightened, and it never goes to 'sleep' like the physical body. This is what is meant by saying that the Lord is remains awake at all the times of the day and night.

Further, this 'consciousness' is an eternal and immortal entity that never dies. It is the gross body of the creature that dies, and similarly it is the gross physical world that ends at the end of an era. But this 'consciousness' does not die or end as it is eternal and imperishable. So it remains the same and transcends the limits of time and era.

This is what is basically meant here: The individual's true 'self' or his Atma represents Lord Ram, and this metaphysical fact is depicted by saying that the Lord lives in the subtle heart of all living beings. Since the Atma is pure consciousness that is eternal and wise, it never dies with time and remains always awake.

Technically, the word 'Yuga' means an era or age. There are four such ages in Hinduism, such as Sat, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. It also refers to the four quarters of time of six hours each that constitute a day of twenty-four hours.] (4).

By worshipping and adoring such a gracious Lord Ram and chanting his holy name (jākē bhajē), even the evil-bodied birds and animals as well as the vile demons (trijaga jōni tanu tāmasō) had become exalted and praise-worthy in the three Lokas, i.e. in the terrestrial world, the subterranean world and the heavens (tilōka-tilaka bhayē)⁵.

Oh Tulsidas! Those who do not worship, venerate, adore and have devotion for such a munificent, benevolent and glorious Lord (who is a bestower of bliss and happiness to all, who is courteous, beautiful, dear, a well-wisher and a benefactor of

all the creatures, who is clever and wise, who is a purifier of those who are sinful and evil, who is forgiving, benevolent, magnanimous and merciful to the extreme) (tulasī aisē prabhuhiṁ bhajai jō na)—verily it must be true that the Creator is opposed to them, is malevolent and angry at them, for he has corrupted their wisdom and intellect to such an extent that they can't even think of and see their own good and welfare. Such persons are indeed most unfortunate and worthy of pity (tāhi bidhātā bāma sō)!]

[⁵Refer also to the following verses among others in this book Vinai Patrika as they emphasise the same idea: verse no. 134; verse no. 135, stanza no. 4; verse no. 154, stanza no. 2.

Lord Ram had graciously granted liberation and deliverance to even the demons because they had been remembering the Lord, albeit out of animosity with him. This implies that it is important to 'remember Lord Ram at all costs' if one expects his spiritual welfare in this world. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 45.] (5).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Tulasīdās' Humility

Rāga Naṭa

(158)

कैसे देऊँ नाथहिं खोरि ।
 काम—लोलुप भ्रमत मन हरि भगति परिहरि तोरि ।।1।।
 बहुत प्रीति पुजाइबे पर, पूजिबे पर थोरि ।
 देत सिख सिखयो न मानत, मूढ़ता असि मोरि ।।2।।
 किये सहित सनेह जे अघ हृदय राखे चोरि ।
 संग—बस किये सुभ सुनाये सकल लोक निहोरि ।।3।।
 करौं जो कछु धरौं सचि—पचि सुकृत—सिला बटोरि ।
 पैठि उर बरबस दयानिधि दंभ लेत अँजोरि ।।4।।
 लोभ मनहिं नचाव कपि ज्यों, गरे आसा—डोरि ।
 बात कहौं बनाइ बुध ज्यों, बर बिराग निचोरि ।।5।।
 एतेहुँ पर तुम्हरो कहावत, लाज अँचई घोरि ।
 निलजता पर रीझि रघुबर, देहु तुलसिहिं छोरि ।।6।।

(158)

kaisē dē'um' nāthahim khōri.
 kāma-lōlupa bhramata mana hari bhagati parihari tōri. 1.
 bahuta prīti pujā'ibē para, pūjibē para thōri.
 dēta sikha sikhayō na mānata, mūrhatā asi mōri. 2.

kiyē sahita sanēha jē agha hṛdaya rākhē cōri.
 saṅga-basa kiyē subha sunāyē sakala lōka nihōri. 3.
 karauṁ jō kachu dharaum saci-paci sukr̥ta-silā baṭōri.
 paiṭhi ura barabasa dayānidhi dambha lēta am̐jōri. 4.
 lōbha manahim̐ nacāva kapi jyōm̐, garē āsā-dōri.
 bāta kahaum̐ banā'i budha jyōm̐, bara birāga nicōri. 5.
 ētēhum̐ para tumharō kahāvata, lāja am̐cā'i ghōri.
 nilajatā para rījhi raghubara, dēhu tulasihim̐ chōri. 6.

Verse no. 158—How can I blame my Lord (for my miseries and sorrows) and find fault with him (kaisē dē'um̐ nāthahim̐ khōri)?

Oh Lord Hari!¹ My Mana (the mind and heart combine) has abandoned your devotion, and instead it is so much tempted and infatuated by the charms and pleasures of the sense objects of this gross material world that it pursues them relentlessly so much so that it keeps on wandering madly and aimlessly here and there (almost like a shelterless and listless vagabond in its desire for self-gratification) (kāma-lōlupa bhramata mana hari bhagati parihari tōri).

[¹'Hari' is one of the many names of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of creation who had manifested himself as Lord Ram.] (1).

I like and am very eager to get praise and honour for myself (i.e. I always wish that people call me very wise, pious and devoted to you) (bahuta prīti pujā'ibē para), but I am least interested in having real devotion for you, nor do I sincerely honour you, or ever praise you or sing your glories (pūjibē para thōri). [To wit, how nice would it have been if I had shown the same eagerness and liking for honouring and worshipping you that I have for gaining attention and praise for myself.]

I preach a lot to others, but myself I do not listen to any wise advice that is given to me, nor do I practice what I preach others (dēta sikha sikhayō na mānata).

Oh Lord, it is so foolish and wicked of me that my Mana behaves in this utterly irresponsible and deceitful manner (mūṛhatā asi mōri) (2).

Although I carefully and diligently conceal in my heart the secrets of the many sins and misdeeds that I had indulged in during my life (and try my best to hide them from others) (kiyē sahita sanēha jē agha hṛdaya rākhē cōri), but if I happen to do an isolated good deed by chance due to the good influence of some wise company of saints, I go about boasting of it and advertise it to the world (saṅga-basa kiyē subha sunāyē sakala lōka nihōri)². [Honestly, I do this so that no one would treat me as a sinner, but on the contrary think that I am a very wise, noble and righteous person. I am, therefore, an imposter and a deceitful person.]

[²In this context, refer also to verse no. 141, stanza no. 4; verse no. 142, stanza no. 7; verse no. 143, stanza no. 4 where a similar idea has been expressed.] (3).

[I have heard that one should practice to gradually accumulate the positive effects that good deeds produce in one's inner-self, as this slowly helps to improve a person in the long run and aid him in cleansing his inner-being from all the taints and impurities that stick there. So—] If any meritorious, good and noble deeds are done by me, I carefully gather them and keep them in my heart like someone picking up scattered

grains from a field and storing them for future use in the granary (*karaum̐ jō kachu dharaum̐ saci-paci sukr̥ta-silā baṭōri*)³.

Oh my merciful Lord (*dayānidhi*)! The great irony is that ‘*dambha*’ (i.e. the negative factors such as falsehood, pride, vanity, hypocrisy, deceit, conceit, pretensions), which prevails inside me, gets the better of me and throws out whatever good I may have accumulated inside me as a result of doing the few good deeds that I manage to do (*paṭṭhi ura barabasa dambha lēta am̐jōri*)⁴.

[³To wit, if I manage to do some good deed, I remember it, and I try to do it again as often as I can. The metaphor of ‘picking up scattered grains from a field or a meadow and storing them’ means that my good deeds are not many, for they are very few and scattered in between my bad deeds. My good deeds are like the few scattered grains that lie on the ground in a farmer’s field. Like a foolish farmer who does not pay heed to the main stock of grains that he allows to be destroyed or getting lost due to his negligence, laziness or some other reason, and then he begins to lament at his loss and goes to the field to pick some stray pieces of grain that may have fallen to the ground while the main harvest has been lost for good, I too lament at the lost opportunity I had for doing enough good deeds while still there was time, but now realising their value I search for any random meritorious deed that I may have done, and discovering one or two such isolated deeds, I pick them up, i.e. I immediately recall them and make a boast of such noble deeds that I have done.

One has to search the earth closely to pick up some stray grains that lie scattered on the ground here and there. This is in sharp contrast to a granary where one can scoop up bagfuls of grains with utmost ease. Likewise, I make a great deal of effort to locate one or two isolated good deeds that I might have done, and then I pick them up carefully to store them in my heart and memory. I hope to make a good harvest in the future with such few grains! That is, I hope that my fate would be secured and I may get happiness and peace due to the good effects of some isolated good deeds done by me, forgetting that the negative and bad effects of the huge bundle of my horrible deeds would weigh heavily against any such gain that I may have made by the virtue of doing some few meritorious deeds. But still I diligently pick up some good deeds that I do so that by-and-by this may help me to purify my innerself and help me to mend my ways. But what happens now?

⁴To wit, just like rodents destroy any residual grain the poor farmer manages to salvage from being ruined, these negative traits that are inherently present inside me sabotage all my efforts at improving myself. These bad habits are firmly entrenched in my heart, and they eject the few good qualities that I manage to develop inside me.] (4).

Besides this, the negative factor of ‘*lōbha*’ (greed, longing, avarice, wistfulness and desires for material gains) has tied my Mana with a rope of hope and expectations (*lōbha manahim̐ nacāva*), and it makes me dance like a monkey who is tied by a rope and made to dance at the whims of the monkey-charmer (*kapi jyōm̐, garē āsā-dōri*).

In spite of this, I wander about preaching others, albeit deceitfully and pretentiously, like a great wise man who is knowledgeable about the essence of renunciation and the philosophy of the scriptures (*bāta kahaum̐ banā’i budha jyōm̐, bara birāga nicōri*)!⁴

[⁴I am so greedy that though I know that I have not much to boast of in the way of good deeds that would set an example for others to emulate, or much to claim by way of a noble life that deserves honour and praise, because I know that I have never practiced what I had preached, I still go around telling others about the many excellent principles taught in the scriptures, and expect the world to honour me as a learned man who should be followed and shown due respect.

Further, I have been so greedy that I lust for all the material things of the world, and I hook myself to all the charms and pleasures that this world and its material objects have to offer to me, but the irony is that I go around teaching others about renunciation and detachment! How incredulous, pretentious, deceitful and irresponsible this behaviour of mine is indeed for me.] (5).

Though I am so pretentious, so deceitful and evil, I still exult in calling myself your servant, i.e. I enjoy in declaring myself as your faithful follower and devotee as well as a saintly and wise person (*ētēhum̐ para tumharō kahāvata*), and woe to me that I am not ashamed of it or feel shy in doing so. It appears that I have literally made a hearty drink of the virtues of modesty, shame and honour, and gulped it down (*lāja am̐caī ghōri*)!⁵

[⁵To wit, it is clear that I am so fallen and shameless that I have totally forsaken modesty and dignified behaviour. I am boastful and completely dishonourable. I ought to be extremely ashamed of myself, and to say the least I must bury myself in dishonour for my immodesty and bad manners.]

Oh Lord Raghubara (Lord Sri Ram)! Please be gracious enough not to get annoyed but feel amused at my impertinence, my inaptitude, my perversity, and ingratituous character and stubborn nature to forgive me for all my sins and inadequacies (*nilajatā para rījhi*)—and be kind to free this Tulsidas of all his fetters by cutting them and setting him free (*dēhu tulasihim chōri*)⁶.

[⁶The word “chōri” means to let go, to set free. So another way of interpreting this stanza is as follows: “Oh Lord. Please forgive Tulsidas for being so stubborn that he is not at all ashamed for all his sins, evils and shortcomings, and instead of getting annoyed with him please be amused by his child-like behaviour just like a father would act when he observes his son acting foolishly and mischievously.

You are famed for your magnanimity, mercy, grace, benevolence and forgiveness. Being of this excellent nature, and being extremely generous and broad-hearted, you should step-in to cut the spiritual fetters of Tulsidas and salvage whatever is left for him in his destiny.

To wit, oh Lord, you must overlook my follies, misdeeds, defects and shortcomings, and forgive him for them while granting me freedom from the bondage of this mundane existence, from the cycle of birth and death, and from the countless miseries and torments that I am subjected to. Oh Lord, it is your time-tested reputation that you look after even the most sinful and fallen ones in this creation. So herein lies my only hope.] (6).

[Note—The idea expressed in this verse no. 158 is reiterated once again and expanded further in verse no. 159 that follows herein below.]

Tulasīdās' Humility & Lord Rāma's Holy Name

(159)

है प्रभु! मेरोई सब दोसु।
सीलसिंधु कृपाल नाथ अनाथ आरत-पोसु।।1।।
बेष बचन बिराग मन अघ अवगुननिको कोसु।
राम प्रीति-प्रतीति पोली, कपट-करतब ठोसु।।2।।
राग-रंग कुसंग ही सों, साधु-संगति रोसु।
चहत केहरि-जसहिं सेइ सृगाल ज्यों खरगोसु।।3।।
संभु-सिखवन रसन हूँ नित राम-नामहिं घोसु।
दंभहू कलि नाम कुंभज सोच-सागर-सोसु।।4।।
मोद-मंगल-मूल अति अनुकूल निज निरजोसु।
रामनाम प्रभाव सुनि तुलसिहुँ परम परितोसु।।5।।

(159)

hai prabhu! mērō'ī saba dōsu.
sīlasindhu kṛpāla nātha anātha ārata-pōsu. 1.
bēṣa bacana birāga mana agha avagunanikō kōsu.
rāma prīti-pratīti pōlī, kapaṭa-karataba ṭhōsu. 2.
rāga-raṅga kusaṅga hī sōṁ, sādhu-saṅgati rōsu.
cahata kēhari-jasahim sē'i sṛgāla jyōm kharagōsu. 3.
sambhu-sikhavana rasana hūm' nita rāma-nāmahim ghōsu.
dambhahū kali nāma kaṁubhaja sōca-sāgara-sōsu. 4.
mōda-maṅgala-mūla ati anukūla nija nirajōsu.
rāmanāma prabhāva suni tulasihum' parama paritōsu. 5.

Verse no. 159—Oh Lord (Sri Ram) (hai prabhu)! All the faults are mine (and it will be therefore wrong on my part to blame you for my miseries and troubles) (mērō'ī saba dōsu)¹.

[¹This statement is obviously an answer to the poser in line no. 1 of stanza no. 1 of verse no. 158 herein above where Tulsidas says “How can I blame my Lord”. He gives an answer here, saying that he himself is to blame for all his miseries, and not the Lord!]

You are an ocean of noble characters and auspicious virtues (sīlasindhu), most merciful and compassionate (kṛpāla), the Lord of the destitutes and the desolate ones (nātha anātha), and the sustainer and care-taker of those who are miserable, wretched, meek, lowly, poverty-stricken and distressed (ārata-pōsu). [To wit, surely there must be something seriously wrong with me that I suffer so much in spite of having a Lord like you who are so nice, gracious, merciful and obliging.] (1).

From my attire and my utterances (as well as my external appearances), I appear to be a person who practices ‘Vairagya’ (renunciation, detachment and dispassion for every

material charms of this gross world) (*bēṣa bacana birāga*), but my ‘Mana’ (mind and heart; my inner-self) is a virtual treasury of sins, vices and evil characters (*mana agha avagunanikō kōsu*).

My mind and heart are hollow as far as having faith, belief, devotion and affection for Lord Ram is concerned (“*rāma prīti-pratīti pōlī*”—i.e. I do not have the slightest love, devotion, faith and belief in Lord Ram). But yes, for deceitful, cunning and treacherous deeds and thoughts, for being pretentious and cunning, my Mana is very active and quite packed-solid with these evils tendencies (“*kapāṭa-karataba ṭhōsu*”—i.e. my Mana is full of these vices and negative traits)².

[²To wit, instead of having some good qualities and practicing some righteous deeds, my mind keeps its self occupied in evil thoughts. It behaves in such a way that the outside world thinks I am a pious person who has love and devotion for the Lord God, whereas the truth is quite the opposite. I preach renunciation and dispassion to others, but myself am neck-deep in indulgences related to the sense objects of this material world. It’s really a grave issue, but my Mana is so stupid that it does not seem to realise the gravity of this situation and the negative effect it is having on my spiritual well-being and my future good.] (2).

My habits and manners have become tainted and my mind and heart have been sullied by the evil company I am accustomed to keep and feel delighted in doing so (*rāga-raṅga kusaṅga hī sōm*); I do not like the good company of saints and pious people, and if I happen to find myself in one, I soon get agitated and annoyed (*sādhū-saṅgati rōsu*).

My condition is like a stupid rabbit who wishes to have fame and reputation similar to that of a lion by serving and keeping company of a jackal (*cahata kēhari-jasahim sē’i srgāla jyōm kharagōsu*)³.

[³When a rabbit who is so foolish as to serve a jackal who is disguised as a lion in the hope that it would be feared and honoured by other animals of the forest that it has befriended the ‘king of the jungle’, i.e. the crooked jackal who has disguised itself as a lion, the consequences are fatal for the poor rabbit. The reason is that, one, some or the other day, the conceit of the jackal would come into the open and the animals would kill both of them, and two, the jackal itself has disguised itself in this way to tempt the rabbit to come close to it when it will get an opportunity to pounce upon the poor creature and kill it for meat.

Tulsidas says that his Mana is like this idiotic rabbit. The Mana thinks that the charms of the material world are for real and would give it sustained happiness, without realising that it is simply an illusion to trap it, and the result would be horrible misery and troubles forever.

Similarly, the Mana finds joy in the company of wicked people as they talk about tempting pleasures and immediate enjoyments of this world, things that would gratify the natural urges of the body and its sense organs. Therefore the Mana shuns the company of saints and wise people as they talk about renouncing such pleasures and comforts of the world as they are all transient and give distress in the long run. Such good company irritates the Mana, while bad company makes it delighted.

The clear message here is that it is foolhardy and erroneous to expect any good fame and welfare if one keeps bad company. What to talk of fame and recognition, even a person's residual remaining good qualities are gradually destroyed in bad company, as a result of which he not only gets a bad name but since his deeds become evil he is bound to re-enter the vicious cycle of birth and death once again.] (3).

Lord Shiva wisely advises the “tongue” that it should repeat and chant Lord Sri Ram's holy name loudly and clearly, with exultation and joy (**sambhu-sikhavana rasana hūm̐ -- ghōsu**), and on a regular basis (**nita rāma-nāmahim**).

Indeed, in all sooth, and without any gainsay, Lord Ram's holy and divine name is very effective in this age of Kaliyug for the purpose of drying up (destroying; eliminating; overcoming) even the largest ocean of worries, consternations, miseries, troubles and torments that otherwise instills tremendous fear and terror in the heart of a person, even if the Lord's name is invoked without having much faith and conviction in its powers, potentials and holiness, or even if it is said deceptively and without sincerity to serve one's some vested interest (like for instance showing to the world that the particular person is a holy man in order to gain popularity and material gains). In this ability, the Lord's holy name is like sage Agastya who had dried up the ocean by gulping down its water in a short time (**dambhahū kali nāma kaṁubhaja sōca-sāgara-sōsu**)⁴.

[⁴The story goes that once sage Agastya had drunk the entire ocean in a few gulps by cupping up its water in his joint palms.

Once, when Indra had killed the demon Vrittaasur, other demons named ‘Kaaleya’ managed to escape and they hid themselves under the water of the ocean. From there they began terrorizing the sages and seers. They stayed under water during daytime and came out at night to torment and devour these sages, and generally cause nuisance and havoc all around. These demons had not spared even such renowned sages of the time as Vashistha, Chyavan and Bharadwaj, because the demons attacked their hermitages and killed the sages and seers who lived there. It was then that the Gods, led by their king Indra, requested sage Agastya to somehow expose the demons. At this, the sage had scooped up the water of the ocean in a cup made by joining the two palms of his hands and had drunk the water of the ocean in one gulp so as to expose the demons. The Gods were then able to destroy them.

This story is narrated in: (i) Skanda Puran, Nagar Khand, (ii) Padma Puran, Srishti Khand, and (iii) the epic Mahabharat, Vanparva. This feat of sage Agastya is cited by Goswami Tulsidas in his epic narration of the story of Lord Ram, known as the Ram Charit Manas, in its Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 256.] (4).

This divine and holy name of Lord Sri Ram is the root (i.e. a provider; a bestower; a granter) of all blissfulness, auspiciousness, good fortunes, happiness, joy and delight (**mōda-maṅgala-mūla**).

For serving one's self-interest and welfare (both spiritual and temporal), Lord Sri Ram's name is very effective, very efficient and very powerful so much so that it cannot be compared with any other favourable or benign factor in this world (**ati anukūla nija nirajōsu**).

Hearing about such astounding spiritual potentials and stupendous mystical powers that Lord Ram's holy name possesses and its bearing upon a person's destiny and fate, Tulsidas feels exhilarated as he is highly reassured and hugely satisfied about his own security and happiness in life (because he has no other means from which to hope of getting any succour and solace in his life except the Lord's holy name "RAM") (rāmanāma prabhāva suni tulasihum⁵ parama paritōsu)⁵.

[⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 25.] (5).

Tulasīdāsa seeks refuge in Lord Rāma's Holy feet

(160)

मैं हरि पतित-पावन सुने ।
 मैं पतित तुम पतित-पावन दोउ बानक बने ॥1॥
 व्याध गनिका गज अजामिल साखि निगमनि भने ।
 और अधम अनेक तारे जात कापै गने ॥2॥
 जानि नाम अजानि लीन्हें नरक सुरपुर मने ।
 दासतुलसी सरन आयो, राखिये आपने ॥3॥

(160)

mairṁ hari patita-pāvana sunē.
 mairṁ patita tuma patita-pāvana dō'u bānaka banē. 1.
 byādha ganikā gaja ajāmila sākhi nigamani bhanē.
 aura adhama anēka tārē jāta kāpai ganē. 2.
 jāni nāma ajāni līnhēm naraka surapura manē.
 dāsatusī sarana āyō, rākhiyē āpanē. 3.

Verse no. 160—I (Tulsidas) have heard that Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Ram) is the purifier and an uplifter of those who are downtrodden, deprived, wretched, sinful and lowly (mairṁ hari patita-pāvana sunē).

[Addressing Lord Ram, Tulsidas says—] Now therefore, since I am the latter type of person while you are the Lord with the aforementioned qualities (mairṁ patita tuma patita-pāvana), a good rapport is deemed to have been established between the two of us; verily, it is a good combination that makes us immediately compatible with each other (dō'u bānaka banē)¹.

[¹To wit, it is your declared vow that you purify the sinful and are the best friend of the humble and lowly persons, and I am honestly one such person who fits the bill perfectly. Therefore, I am a good candidate who must benefit from your largesse and granting of boons in this respect. Hence, I don't have doubt now that I

would become purified by all means, and that all my sins, evils and misdeeds would be neutralised. I expect succour and solace from you; I hope you will redeem me and salvage my future from ruin and misery.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 29 also in this context.

There are countless verses in Vinai Patrika that emphasise this point—i.e. that there is no other Lord who selflessly and dedicatedly takes care of the have-nots and the lowly creatures who lack all other merit except that they have come to the Lord with a pitiful prayer for protection and shelter. All Lord Ram wants is love and affection, devotion and faith in their hearts to welcome them with open arms. Refer: verse no. 84, stanza no. 4; verse no. 99, stanza no. 1; verse no. 139, stanza no. 12; verse no. 210, stanza no. 1; verse no. 213, stanza no. 1; verse no. 216, stanza no. 1; verse no. 217, stanza no. 1 amongst others.] (1).

The Vedas bear witness to the fact that you have helped the cruel hunter-cum-bandit (i.e. Valmiki), Ganika (the prostitute named Pingla), the Elephant (called Gaja), Ajamil (the sinful Brahmin) (*byādha ganikā gaja ajāmila sākhi nigamani bhanē*)², and numerous other lowly, wretched, deprived, sinful, downtrodden and wicked ones to cross the ocean symbolised by this mundane world of transmigration that the list of such lucky creatures is so long that it is not possible for anyone to keep a count of them (*aura adhama anēka tāre jāta kāpai ganē*)³.

[²Refer: Verse nos. 57, 94, 152, 154 etc. of this book Vinai Patrika.

³Verily, the list of such souls that have got liberation and deliverance at your hands is long and legendary. Say, who can keep a count of such instances that show your mercy, grace, benevolence and kindness upon the lowly, the hopeless, the distressed and the sinful?] (2).

Those who have uttered your holy name (even once), either consciously or unconsciously (i.e. willingly or unwillingly) (*jāni nāma ajāni līnhēm*)⁴, are freed from the compulsion of entering either the hell or the heaven (*naraka surapura manē*)⁵.

Realising the truth of all this, this servant of yours named Tulsidas has come to you (i.e. Lord Ram) to surrender and seek refuge and shelter in your holy feet (*dāsatulasī sarana āyō*).

So oh Lord, please be kind to accept him also as one of your own (like the way you have done for other sinful ones listed herein above in this verse (*rākhiyē āpanē*).

[⁴To wit, there is no wonder that such souls are surely assured safety from going to the hell. But going to heaven is also not deemed fit for them who chant Lord Ram's divine name as it is too small a reward for them, for though this destination is an exalted one in its own right but it would a suitable reward that suits those who do good deeds and lead a meritorious life. But those who say Lord Ram's holy name deserve something much higher and better.

Therefore, they transcend heaven and find the ultimate destination where the soul rests in eternal peace, where they find eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity. It's a destination called emancipation and salvation of the soul where it merges with the

Supreme Soul of this creation so that it is freed from the cycle of birth and death.

Refer: (i) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 159, stanza no. 4; (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28 that express the same view.]

⁵To wit, every individual is bound to suffer the consequences of what he does in his present life. If the majority of his deeds and actions are good and righteous and they weigh more in his favour as compared to his isolated misdeeds, his soul goes to heaven to enjoy the rewards. And it goes to hell to suffer punishment if the evil deeds outweigh the good ones. In the case of those who surrender themselves to Lord Ram and use the medicine of the Lord's holy name, then all their spiritual diseases are taken care of, and upon shedding their mortal body their soul gets final rest. Such persons get final rest for themselves, and their soul finds eternal emancipation and salvation. They are permanently freed from the cycle of birth and death. They reach a state of existence that transcends such lowly levels as hell or even the better level of the heaven, for in both the cases the soul has to come back to this gross world by taking another birth once the effects of its past life that has made it go either to the heaven or the hell wears off. But the glory of Lord Ram's holy name is such that it takes the soul much higher to a level where it merges or coalesces with its parent Soul that is known as the 'Parmatma' or the Supreme Soul of this creation, from where it need not come down to this gross existence any more.] (3).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Rāma's Glory

Rāga Malāra

(161)

तो सों प्रभु जो पै कहूँ कोउ होतो ।
 तौ सहि निपट निरादर निसिदिन, रटि लटि ऐसो घटि को तो ॥1॥
 कृपा—सुधा—जलदान माँगिबो कहौँ सो साँच निसोतो ।
 स्वाति—सनेह—सलिल—सुख चाहत चित—चातक सोपोतो ॥2॥
 काल—करम—बस मन कुमनोरथ कबहुँ कबहुँ कुछ भो तो ।
 ज्यों मुदमय बसि मीन बारि तजि उछरि भभरि लेत गोतो ॥3॥
 जितो दुराव दासतुलसी उर क्यों कहि आवत ओतो ।
 तेरे राज राय दसरथ के, लयो बयो बिनु जोतों ॥4॥

(161)

tō sōm prabhu jō pai kahūṁ kō'u hōtō.
 tau sahi nipaṭa nirādara nisidina, raṭi laṭi aisō ghaṭi kō tō. 1.

krpā-sudhā-jaladāna mām̐gibō kahaur̐n sō sām̐ca nisōtō.
 svāti-sanēha-salila-sukha cāhata cita-cātaka sōpōtō. 2.
 kāla-karama-basa mana kumanōratha kabahum̐ kabahum̐ kucha bhō tō.
 jyōm̐ mudamaya basi mīna bāri taji uchari bhabhari lēta gōtō. 3.
 jītō durāva dāsātulasī ura kyōm̐ kahi āvata ōtō.
 tērē rāja rāya dasaratha kē, layō bayō binu jōtōm̐. 4.

Verse no. 161—[In this verse, Tulsidas affectionately chides his beloved Lord Ram for not paying attention to his prayers immediately. This particular approach—where a saintly devotee of the Lord has so much confidence in himself as well as the forgiving and loving nature of his Fatherly Lord that no matter how much he chides the Lord and continues to nag and pester him with his complaints and demands, he is absolutely sure that the Lord would not take umbrage at his impertinence, but would rather love his devotee all the more for being so frank and so solid in his faith and conviction that in spite of an apparent non-chalant attitude of the Lord the devotee continues with his devotion and adherence to his faith in the Lord—is what makes the prayers and submissions of Tulsidas in this wonderful Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ so unique and amazing.

Rarely would one find another instance of a Prayer Book where such a bold attitude is adopted by a devotee that he has the guts to chide and admonish his Lord God for delaying in paying attention to his prayers and submissions.

The delay does not in the least mean that Lord Ram is unconcerned about Tulsidas’ fate or miseries, or that the Lord is neglecting him. But it indicates that the Lord is enjoying the fretting and fuming of his beloved devotee just like a loving father or mother would find pleasure when their child runs around them with some kind of demand, needling them and constantly complaining them about some imaginary problem or fear that actually do not exist.]

Oh Lord! If there had been another Lord or Master who was as great and gracious and kind as you are (in looking after the welfare and well-being of his servants like myself) (tō sōm̐ prabhu jō pai kahūm̐ kō’u hōtō)— say, who is so foolish, mean and lowly that he would have become emaciated chanting your name day and night, uselessly and unnecessarily, bearing all the insults, insinuations and humiliations that he has to suffer from in this process (tau sahi nipaṭa nirādara nisidina, raṭi laṭi aisō ghaṭi kō tō)?¹

[¹Tulsidas says that there is no Lord who is more gracious, kind and generous than Lord Ram in this world. If there had been even one such Lord besides Lord Ram, then surely those who prefer to suffer and undergo hardships to please the Lord would have certainly abandoned him and go looking somewhere else where relief from their miseries could be had more easily and conveniently. This is a natural thing to happen.

But it is to the credit of Lord Ram that there is not a single Lord or Master in this world who can be compared to him, who is as gracious, kind, compassionate, merciful and understanding as him.] (1).

The elixir of mercy, compassion, benevolence, grace and kindness that I seek from you as a gift (krpā-sudhā-jaladāna mām̐gibō) is really one of its own kind (i.e. it is matchless and unique; its without a parallel) (kahaur̥ sō sām̐ca nisōtō).

Verily oh Lord, my mind, which is like a young chick of the bird called ‘cātaka’, seeks to drink the nectar-like drop of water which drops from the sky only during the presence of the constellation known as ‘svāti’, and which gives this bird abounding bliss, happiness, peace and joy (svāti-sanēha-salila-sukha cāhata cita-cātaka sōpōtō)².

[²Here, Lord Ram is the ‘svāti’ Nakshatra which is special configuration of stars, the Lord’s mercy and grace is the ‘nectar-like rain water’, and the heart and mind of Tulsidas are the ‘chick of the bird cātaka’, which is a cockoo. This bird is famed for its love and devotion for this particular constellation in the sky, for it gazes skywards and keeps its beak open so that a single drop of dew or rain-water could fall directly into its beak during the presence of this constellation so that it can quench its thirst. It thrills this bird immensely, and it prefers not to drink any other form of water during this period, such as from a pond or fountain, even preferring to die if it could not drink a single drop of dew or rain-water during the time the ‘svāti’ Nakshatra lasts.] (2).

Due to the some bad or malignant influence of Kaal (time, circumstances) and Karma (deeds done by a creature) (kāla-karama-basa), if evil desires do sometimes manage to enter my mind as a result of which my mind is diverted from your thoughts and gets involved in evil things of this world (mana kumanōratha kabahum̐ kabahum̐ kucha bhō tō)—then this situation is akin to a fish which jumps out of water for a fleeting moment, feels sore affright of being suffocated to death, and so it immediately falls back into the water which is its natural habitat, and which restores its peace of mind and happiness once again (jyōm̐ mudamaya basi mīna bāri taji uchari bhabhari lēta gōtō)³.

[³Like the fish that cannot tolerate separation from water, this Tulsidas too can't stand separation from you even for a moment, because that single moment is enough to agitate me and make me utterly miserable like the fish is for the few seconds that it is out of water. So therefore, even if my mind gets distracted for sometime and goes pursuing the material things of the mundane gross world, or it allows bad thoughts to enter and agitate me, I immediately rectify myself and prevail upon my mind to go back to remembering you and chanting your holy name. Being a human, this is not something unusual.] (3).

[But I don't think that what I say is absolutely true and honest because—] How can anyone narrate the amount of deceit, cunning, pretensions and evil that are in the heart (and mind) of Tulsidas (jitō durāva dāsatalasī ura kyōm̐ kahi āvata ōtō)⁴?

But oh Lord who is so dear to King Dasrath (rāya dasaratha kē)! [This refers to the fact that Lord Ram had taken birth as a son of King Dasrath of Ayodhya.]

People have reaped a harvest in your kingdom even without sowing any worthwhile seed or tilling the land (tērē rāja layō bayō binu jōtōm̐)⁵.

[⁴I don't claim to be a holy and realised person who would be so enlightened that he would always remain submerged in your thoughts and do meditation on your

holy name and form. I can't claim that my mind and heart are absolutely pure and uncorrupt. After all, I am a human being, and so I am subjected to all the shortcomings and faults that are characteristic of and inherent in a human. So what's the problem here! I am not shying away from accepting my faults and flaws, but is it not true that creatures who are far worse than me have been redeemed by you? Refer: verse no. 160 in this connection. Also to: verse nos. 158, stanza no. 6, and verse no. 159, stanza no. 2.

⁵To wit, numerous sinners have got salvation and emancipation without doing any worthwhile good deed, solely on the strength of your holy name. Likewise, I am sure, I will also get this spiritual reward even though I have neither done nor expect to do any worthy thing in my life.

Here Tulsidas means that one need not do elaborate rituals to attain salvation. Lord Sri Ram's holy name is sufficient to provide it to the seeker.] (4).

Lord Rāma's Generosity

Rāga Sōraṭha

(162)

ऐसो को उदार जग माहीं ।
 बिनु सेवा जो द्रवै दीनपर राम सरिस कोउ नाहीं ॥1॥
 जो गति जोग बिराग जतन करि नहिं पावत मुनि ग्यानी ।
 सो गति देत गीध सबरी कहँ प्रभु न बहुत जिय जानी ॥2॥
 जो संपति दस सीस अरप करि रावन सिव पहुँ लीन्हीं ।
 सो संपदा बिभीषन कहँ अति सकुच—सहित हरि दीन्हीं ॥3॥
 तुलसिदास सब भाँति सकल सुख जो चाहसि मन मेरो ।
 तौ भजु राम, काम सब पूरन करै कृपानिधि तेरो ॥4॥

(162)

aisō kō udāra jaga māhīm.
 binu sēvā jō dravai dīnapara rāma sarisa kō'u nāhīm. 1.
 jō gati jōga birāga jatana kari nahīm pāvata muni gyānī.
 sō gati dēta gīdha sabarī kaham̐ prabhu na bahuta jiya jānī. 2.
 jō sampati dasa sīsa arapa kari rāvana siva paham̐ līnhīm.
 sō sampadā bibhīṣana kaham̐ ati sakuca-sahita hari dīnhīm. 3.
 tulasidāsa saba bhām̐ti sakala sukha jō cāhasi mana mērō.
 tau bhaju rāma, kāma saba pūrana karaim̐ kṛpānidhi tērō. 4.

Verse no. 162—Who is so generous, liberal, large-hearted and magnanimous in this world (like Lord Ram is) (aisō kō udāra jaga māhīm) that he becomes full of pity, compassion and mercy immediately on seeing those who are miserable, tormented,

sorrowful, meek, lowly and humble, without seeking any service or offering from them in return of this favour shown to them (binu sēvā jō dravai dīnapara)¹?

In all sooth and without any gainsay, indeed it is Lord Sri Ram, and no one else; truly indeed there is no one like him anywhere in this world (rāma sarisa kō'u nāhīm)! (1).

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 28.]

The ultimate destination of the soul (which is attainment of emancipation and salvation) that is not easily available even to those who are self-realised and enlightened, such as the great and wise hermits, sages, ascetics and mystics etc. by practicing penances, austerities, renunciation and other such prescribed paths by which one can reach one's spiritual goal in life (jō gati jōga birāga jatana kari nahīm pāvata muni gyānī)—that same destination was made available to the vulture (Jatau) and Sabari (the old tribal woman) by Lord Sri Ram (sō gati dēta gīdha sabarī kaham̃ prabhu).

Inspite of this noble, magnanimous and glorious deed, the Lord never kept it in his mind nor did he ever mention it to anyone, but rather felt that it was not enough and he should have given them something more for them (prabhu na bahuta jiya jānī)².

[²Refer: (i) Verse no. 152, stanza no. 8 of this book Vinai Patrika; (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 32 and Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it (with respect to Jatau); and Doha no. 36 along with Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede it (with respect to Sabari).

Tulsidas means here that though the Lord granted such an exalted stature to both Jatau and Sabari as attaining 'Moksha', or salvation and emancipation for their souls, he kept it to himself and never publicised it. These two had no chance of ever getting any spiritual reward worth the name because they hadn't done any mentionable meritorious deed in their lives, what to talk of attaining emancipation and salvation which is the highest level of achievement a creature can hope for his soul. They were sinful, as Jatau was a meat-eating vulture by birth, and Sabari was an outcaste tribal women of low birth.

Inspite of the gracious Lord granting them a magnificent spiritual reward that is difficult for even great sages and hermits to get, he felt hesitant and shy because he thought it was not sufficient a reward for them, and that he ought to have granted them something more.

Indeed, Lord Ram is so modest and kind in his heart that he never ever boasts of his gifts to his devotees and dependants; he does not want to embarrass the recipients of his grace by making public what they have received from the Lord.] (2).

The huge wealth and the great realm (of the kingdom of Lanka) which Ravana (the demon king) had received as a boon from Lord Shiva by offering his heads ten times to the Lord to please him (jō sampati dasa sīsa arapa kari rāvana siva paham̃ līnhīm)—the same property, the same wealth and the same realm was given to Vibhishan by Lord Sri Ram most hesitantly and shyly (as if it was not enough, for the Lord thought that Vibhishan should have been given more than this) (sō sampadā bibhīṣana kaham̃ ati sakuca-sahita hari dīnhīm)³.

[³Refer: (i) Verse no. 152, stanza no. 9 of this book *Vinai Patrika*; (ii) *Ram Charit Manas*, *Sundar Kand*, Doha no. 49 and Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precede it.

Ravana had done severe Tapa (penance) to receive blessings of ‘freedom from death and Lordship over the demon kingdom’ from Lord Shiva. During the course of doing Tapa he had offered the Lord his head ten times, one by one, as sacrificial offerings. When he had done it nine times, and was about to do it for the tenth time, Lord Shiva was so pleased at his ‘self-sacrifice’ that he appeared before Ravana and granted him a boon that he will not only get back his lost ten heads, but would also never die if someone severs his head umpteen number of times during a one-to-one duel. So it happened that during the war at Lanka, no matter how hard Lord Ram tried to kill him by severing his heads by shooting powerful arrows at Ravana, the heads immediately grew back again, utterly confounding the Lord. Refer: *Ram Charit Manas*, *Lanka Kand*, Doha no. 101 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that follow it.

During the build-up days prior to the epic war of Lanka, Vibhishan had tried his best to make his stubborn elder brother Ravana see reason and mend his attitude to avoid a ruinous war. But Ravana wouldn’t pay heed. One day when Ravana had humiliated his younger brother Vibhishan publicly in full court by kicking him and telling him to go to exile immediately because the latter had tried to give sane advice to his elder brother to avoid bloodshed by giving Sita back to Lord Ram and make peace with him, Vibhishan decided enough was enough, and he came to Lord Ram to surrender himself before the Lord and seek the latter’s protection.

At that time, Lord Ram had warmly welcomed him inspite of grave reservations expressed by his advisors who warned the Lord that it was dangerous and risky to keep an enemy’s brother in their camp. The Lord however felt that he is obliged to give refuge to Vibhishan as the latter was distressed and had come to him seeking shelter and protection that the Lord just cannot refuse to anyone, as it was his declared vow that he would give refuge and protection to those who come to him seeking it, irrespective of who they were and what the situation was that precipitated it.

During the course of preliminary introduction, when the Lord learnt how injustice had been meted out to Vibhishan by his own brother Ravana for no fault of his, the Lord decided to punish the offender (Ravana) and undo the damage by anointing Vibhishan as the next king of Lanka. It was also a gracious gesture on the part of Lord Ram to reward Vibhishan for being righteous and pious throughout his life, as well as for being the Lord’s ardent devotee who had the courage and the perseverance to maintain devotion for the Lord even while living in Lanka, surrounded by fierce demons who were avowed opponents of the Lord.

This entire story is narrated in *Ram Charit Manas*, *Sundar Kand*, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 40—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.] (3).

Tulsidas advises his Mana (mind and heart combine; his inner-self) when he says, ‘Oh my Mana (*tulasidāsa* -- *mana mērō*)! If you wish to have all possible happiness and joy in this world, if you wish to feel delighted and blissful in every conceivable way (*saba bhām̐ti sakala sukha jō cāhasi*), then listen to my sane advice: you should worship, adore and have abiding devotion for Lord Sri Ram (*tau bhaju rāma*). The gracious Lord, who is an ocean of mercy, kindness and compassion, will surely and

without doubt fulfil all your wishes (kāma saba pūrana karaim̐ kṛpānidhi tērō).’
(4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Rāma's Generosity

(163)

एकै दानि—सिरोमनि साँचो ।
जोड़ जाच्यो सोड़ जाचकताबस, फिरि बहु नाच न नाचो ॥1॥
सब स्वारथी असुर सुर नर मुनि कोउ न देत बिनु पाये ।
कोसलपालु कृपालु कलपतरु, द्रवत सकृत् सिर नाये ॥2॥
हरिहु और अवतार आपने, राखी बेद बड़ाई ।
लै चिउरा निधि दई सुदामहिं, जद्यपि बाल—मिताई ॥3॥
कपि सबरी सुग्रीव बिभीषन, को नहिं कियो अजाची ।
अब तुलसिहि दुख देत दयानिधि दारुन आस—पिसाची ॥4॥

(163)

ēkai dāni-sirōmani sām̐cō.
jō'i jācyō sō'i jācakatābasa, phiri bahu nāca na nācō. 1.
saba svārathī asura sura nara muni kō'u na dēta binu pāyē.
kōsalapālu kṛpālu kalapataru, dravata sakṛta sira nāyē. 2.
harihu aura avatāra āpanē, rākhī bēda baṛā'ī.
lai ci'urā nidhi da'ī sudāmahiṁ, jadyapi bāla-mitā'ī. 3.
kapi sabarī sugrīva bibhīṣana, kō nahim̐ kiyō ajācī.
aba tulasīhi dukha dēta dayānidhi dārūna āsa-pisācī. 4.

Verse no. 163—Indeed, in all sooth, and without gainsay, there is only one Lord who is the most exalted among truly generous and large-hearted donors (and those who bestow grants and boons to seekers) (ēkai dāni-sirōmani sām̐cō)! [Here, the “Lord” who is meant to be so magnanimous, benevolent and graceful is Lord Ram.]

Indeed, anyone who has sought anything from you even once gets his desires fulfilled (jō'i jācyō sō'i jācakatābasa) to such an extent that he does not have to ‘dance again and repeatedly ask for it’ (phiri bahu nāca na nācō) either from you or from anyone else. [To wit, a seeker's wishes are completely satisfied by you. He does not feel the need to ask for more. The word “dance” means to do everything within one's ability to try to please someone in order to get some reward or gift.]¹

[¹Refer: Verse no. 162 herein above in the context of this verse.] (1).

The gods, the demons, the humans, the sages—all of them are selfish (saba svārathī asura sura nara muni). No one gives anything without getting something in return (kō'u na dēta binu pāyē)².

Oh Lord of Kaushal (another name for the kingdom of Ayodhya), Lord Sri Ram (*kōsalapālu*)! You are so kind, compassionate and merciful (*krpālu*) that you become a ‘Kalpa Tree’, the evergreen tree of the gods which can grant all wishes of the seeker (*kalapataru*), for anyone who comes to you and bows before you, for you immediately become sympathetic to him, develop empathy for him and feel pity for him so much so that you fulfil all his desires and make him fully contented (*dravata sakṛta sira nāyē*)³.

[²Every one of them expects some kind of offering, service or tribute in return for some favour by way of a blessing or boon that they grant to the seeker. But Lord Ram never thinks of it; the Lord rather feels privileged and happy that he could be of some help to his devotee and those who are in some kind of need.

Refer also to (i) Vinai Patrika: verse no. 75, stanza no. 2; verse no. 145, stanza no. 6; verse no. 153, stanza no. 2; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas: Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 47; Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 110.

³Here, Lord Sri Ram is likened to the Kalp Tree which is the all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods. One does not return empty-handed after asking anything from a Kalp Tree. Similarly, Tulsidas says that Sri Ram never allows anyone to go unsatisfied and unfulfilled from his door. In fact, the seeker gets more than what he had asked for. In this context, see verse nos. 160 and 162 herein above.] (2).

Oh Lord Hari, you have always upheld the traditions sanctified by the Vedas even in your other incarnations (*harihu aura avatāra āpanē, rākhī bēda barāṭ*)—such as when (as Lord Krishna) you had bestowed huge wealth upon Sudama after accepting a humble gift of puffed rice flakes that he had brought for you when he came to visit you (*lai ci'urā nidhi daṭ sudāmahim*), though he was your friend since childhood days (*jadyapi bāla-mitāṭ*)⁴.

[⁴Sudama was very poor, so when he visited Sri Krishna, he could not afford anything else except a few fistfuls of rice as gift for the Lord. Sri Krishna was so moved and overwhelmed at this humble and simple gesture of his childhood friend that he made Sudama one of the richest men on earth.

It is a custom that when one visits someone he takes some gift along for the host. So when Sudama visited Lord Krishna he took a humble gift consisting of some rice flakes because he was extremely poor. Normally, a rich man would not pay much of an attention if he finds that his guest is a very poor man even if he happens to be his closest friend of childhood days. But Lord Krishna ran eagerly to meet and embrace Sudama as soon as he heard that his childhood friend has come to meet him. Then when Sudama most shyly offered the rice flakes, Krishna ate them and relished their taste as if these flakes were the best thing he has ever eaten! After that, Krishna could have waited for a day when he would pay a return visit to Sudama when he would take costly gifts for him. But no; the Lord felt so moved by Sudama's plight that he decided to reward him immediately on the spot—and that too in an imperceptible manner. Lord Krishna did not tell Sudama what he has done for him, but when Sudama returned home he was astonished by the lavish wealth that spread all around him before his eyes.

Tulsidas has a great spiritual message here. It is this: Lord Ram is ever willing and eager to go out of his way to oblige and help his devotee, but the first step has to be taken by the devotee himself. If the devotee approaches the Lord even with a humble prayer, rest assured that all his needs and desires would be fully requited and fulfilled.

This principle applied to Vibhishan and others as well in the story of the Ramayan. For instance, Vibhishan had taken the first step to go and meet Lord Ram, and then the Lord embraced him most affectionately as if he was the Lord's own brother, and not the brother of his enemy Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. The next stanza no. 4 also reiterates this view.] (3).

Whom amongst Sugriv, Sabari, Vibhishan and Hanuman have you not made free from all desires so much so that they had nothing more to ask or seek (*kapi sabarī sugrīva bibhīṣana, kō nahim kiyō ajācī*)⁵?

[⁵To wit, you have fulfilled the wishes of all of them. Nay, not only fulfilled, but you have given them more than what they expected or deserved. Refer: verse no. 152-153, 157 (stanza no. 5), 160, 162.]

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion (*dayānidhi*)! Now this Tulsidas is being tormented by the formidable demoness symbolised by countless desires (*aba tulasīhi dukha dēta dārūna āsa-pisācī*)⁶.

[⁶Hence oh Lord, help me get rid of her by giving me your divine support and blessing. As soon as this 'demoness' comes to know that I have your blessing upon me, she would run away and leave me alone in peace. To wit, all my desires and longings would evaporate in thin air as soon as you, Lord Ram, become gracious and kind upon me.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Ram gives precedence to Devotion above everything else

(164)

जानत प्रीति—रीति रघुराई ।
 नाते सब हाते करि राखत, राम सनेह—सगारै ॥1॥
 नेह निबाहि देह तजि दसरथ, कीरति अचल चलाई ।
 ऐसेहु पितु तें अधिक गीधपर ममता गुन गरुआई ॥2॥
 तिय—बिरही सुग्रीव सखा लखि प्रानप्रिया बिसराई ।
 रन परयो बंधु बिभीषन ही को, सोच हृदय अधिकाई ॥3॥
 घर गुरुगृह प्रिय सदन सासुरे, भइ जब जहँ पहुनाई ।
 तब तहँ कहि सबरीके फलनिकी रुचि माधुरी न पाई ॥4॥
 सहज सरूप कथा मुनि बरनत रहत सकुचि सिर नाई ।
 केवट मीत कहे सुख मानत बानर बंधु बड़ाई ॥5॥
 प्रेम—कनौड़ो रामसो प्रभु त्रिभुवन तिहुँकाल न भाई ।
 तेरो रिनी हौं कह्यो कपि सों ऐसी मानिहि को सेवकाई ॥6॥
 तुलसी राम—सनेह—सील लखि, जो न भगति उर आई ।
 तौ तोहिं जनमि जाय जननी जड़ तनु—तरुनता गवाँई ॥7॥

(164)

jānata prīti-rīti raghurā'ī.
 nātē saba hātē kari rākhata, rāma sanēha-sagā'ī. 1.
 nēha nibāhi dēha taji dasaratha, kīrati acala calā'ī.
 aisēhu pitu tēm adhika gīdhapara mamatā guna garu'ā'ī. 2.
 tiya-birahī sugrīva sakhā lakhi prānapriyā bisarā'ī.
 rana paryō bandhu bibhīṣana hī kō, sōca hṛdaya adhikā'ī. 3.
 ghara gurugṛha priya sadana sāsūrē, bha'i jaba jaham' pahunā'ī.
 taba taham' kahi sabarīkē phalanikī ruci mādhuṛī na pā'ī. 4.
 sahaja sarūpa kathā muni baranata rahata sakuci sira nā'ī.
 kēvaṭa mīta kahē sukha mānata bānara bandhu baṛā'ī. 5.
 prēma-kanaurō rāmasō prabhu tribhuvana tihumkāla na bhā'ī.
 tērō rinī haum' kahyō kapi sōm' aisī mānihi kō sēvakā'ī. 6.
 tulasī rāma-sanēha-sīla lakhi, jō na bhagati ura ā'ī.
 tau tōhim janami jāya janani jāra tanu-tarunata gavām'. 7.

Verse no. 164—Only Lord Sri Ram understands the real meaning and the true essence of the laws that govern pure, truthful and selfless form of love, affection and devotion that has a spiritual bearing (jānata prīti-rīti raghurā'ī).

In all sooth and without gainsay indeed, Lord Sri Ram keeps and recognises only the relationship, and it is of true spiritual love and devotion that is to the exclusion of all other relationships (nātē saba hātē kari rākhata, rāma sanēha-sagā'ī)¹.

[¹Lord Ram gives precedence to the virtues of sincere devotion, undiluted affection and true spiritual love for the Lord over all other virtues and merits in the creature. If a person lacks these eclectic qualities in him, then no matter how hard he tries to please the Lord, he would not be successful even though he may otherwise be an excellent person by all other counts. Even the humblest, the poorest and those who lack any sort of abilities by which one would usually acquire religious merit in this world would be able to become favourite of Lord Ram if such a person has one simple quality in him: and it is to have true devotion and affection for the Lord.] (1).

King Dasrath (the worldly father of Lord Ram and the king of the kingdom of Ayodhya) had died to uphold his love for Lord Ram, and had thereby established his fame for eternity (nēha nibāhi dēha taji dasaratha, kīrati acala calā'ī). But compared to the Lord having love and respect for such a loving father as Dasrath, he had shown greater filial respect and love, more endearment, more affection, more closeness and more affinity in his relationship with a vulture known as Jatau (aisēhu pitu tēm adhika gīdhapara mamatā guna garu'ā'ī)².

[²To wit, Lord Ram had shown greater love and affection and respect for the vulture Jatau than he had shown for his own father Dasrath. This is because Jatau had immense devotion for the Lord, recognised him as the Supreme Being in a human form, and had laid down his life to serve the Lord as compared to Dasrath who showed love for the Lord more because the latter was his worldly 'son' rather than because he was the Supreme Being. Further, Dasrath had died while being the cause of bringing much misery in the life of Lord Ram because it was he who became instrumental in Lord Ram going to the forest for fourteen long years, while Jatau had died trying to bring relief in the Lord's life by trying to save Sita, the Lord's wife, as she was being kidnapped by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka.

Lord Ram had left Dasrath wailing and lamenting when the latter succumbed to the pressure from his wife Kaikeyi, the junior queen, to send Lord Ram to forest exile for fourteen years along with his wife Sita and younger brother Laxman. In other words, Dasrath had been instrumental in causing untold hardships to his son Lord Ram inspite of professing so much love for the latter. In his comparison Jatau had laid down his life when he was killed by the demon king Ravana as he tried to save Sita from being taken away forcefully by him.

Besides this, Dasrath had forgotten in his delusions that Lord Ram was not an ordinary human prince born in his family but the Supreme Lord who had come to become his son only because in his previous life Dasrath had done severe Tapa to ask the Lord to grant him a boon that the latter would become his son so that he could love the Lord as a father would his son. In short, Dasrath treated Lord Ram as his ‘son’ rather than as a personified form of the Supreme Being.

When Dasrath died, he lamented and grieved for being separated from his ‘son’ whom he loved so very much and who had now gone to the forest, but he did not grieve for being separated from the ‘Supreme Being’ or being instrumental in causing so much hardship to the Lord.

In his stark comparison stood Jatau who had laid down his life to serve the Lord’s interests by trying to protect his wife from being abducted by a demon. Then when the time to die came, Jatau willingly embraced it because the Supreme Lord of the world was standing right in his front, a chance that even the greatest of sages and hermits don’t come to get.

Dasrath ‘loved’ Lord Ram as a father would love his son, while Jatau had ‘devotion’ for the Lord, and like a true devotee had laid down his life in the ‘service’ of the Lord, unlike Dasrath.

So, what was the result? Dasrath had not found emancipation after death, and he became a ‘Spirit’, a ‘ghost’; Dasrath’s soul did not immediately find its eternal rest and peace, till much later on when Lord Ram had himself blessed him at the end of the war of Lanka. Jatau on the other hand found instant salvation and emancipation for his soul as soon as he died.

The comparison between the fates of Dasrath and Jatau is also stark because the former died in a miserable condition and grieving for the loss of Lord Ram, while the latter died while lying in the laps of the same Lord as he lovingly caressed the wounded Jatau with his own hands and tended to his wounds personally.

Once again, while Jatau’s last rites were done by Lord Ram himself as befitting a son though the former was a lowly and a cadaver-eating vulture by birth, Dasrath was so unfortunate and condemned that he missed this golden opportunity of being cremated by the Lord though the latter was his own son from the perspective of this mortal gross world, resulting in Dasrath becoming a ghost.

In this connection, the reader is advised to refer to the following sections of Tulsidas’ epic narration of the story of the life and time of Lord Ram in “Ram Charit Manas” as follows: (a) regarding the incidents leading upto Dasrath’s death—Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22—to Doha no. 79; and from Doha no. 147—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 157; (b) regarding Dasrath’s soul becoming a ghost and getting final liberation only when blessed by Lord Ram—Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 112; (c) regarding Jatau’s good deed, death and instant emancipation—Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 33.] (2).

Seeing friend Sugriv's agonies and grief at being separated from his wife, Lord Ram had all but forgotten about his own sorrows of being separated from his beloved wife Sita (who was abducted by Ravana, the demon king) (*tiya-birahī sugrīva sakhā lakhi prānapriyā bisarā'ī*)³.

Dear brother Laxman lay wounded and unconscious in the battle-field of Lanka, but (forgetting him for the moment) Lord Ram was extremely worried about the welfare and future of Vibhishan (*rana paryō bandhu bibhīṣana hī kō, sōca hr̥daya adhikā'ī*)⁴.

[³When Lord Ram found Sugriv grieving for his wife because he had been separated from her as he was forcefully sent to exile by Baali, the Lord had forgotten about his own grief of separation from his wife Sita who had been abducted by Ravana, and he instead gave priority to do something that would remove the sorrows of Sugriv first before worrying how to retrieve his own wife Sita from the demon's clutches. And the Lord achieved this by slaying the latter's elder brother Baali and restoring Sugriv's wife to him. The added bonus that the Lord gave Sugriv was anointing him on the throne of the kingdom of Kishkindha from where he was ousted by his elder brother.

⁴The Lord was upset when Laxman lay gravely wounded in the battle-field of Lanka as the Lord feared that without his support it may be impossible to defeat and eliminate Ravana, the king of Lanka. In the eventuality where the Lord would be unable to defeat Ravana without the help of Laxman, he wondered what would happen to the fate of Vibhishan whom the Lord had already promised the crown of Lanka. This latter predicament weighed heavily in the sub-conscious mind of Lord Ram as he grieved for his wounded brother Laxman. To wit, the Lord was more concerned about the uncertain future of his devotee Vibhishan than about the gravity of the situation where he will lose his own brother Laxman if he succumbed to his wounds, and the pain it would cause to him personally and the family at large when he returned to his kingdom of Ayodhya at the end of the forest exile.

These two incidents are narrated in detail in "Ram Charit Manas" as follows: (a) regarding Sugriv—Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Doha no. 11; (b) regarding Lord Ram promising the crown of Lanka to Vibhishan—Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precede Doha no. 49; (c) regarding Laxman's falling in the battle-field of Lanka—Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 54; and (d) Lord Ram's grieving for Laxman—Doha no. 61 along with Chaupai nos. 1-18 that precede it.] (3).

Whether at home, at the hermitage of Guru Vasistha, at his friends' homes, or at his in-law's place (*ghara gurugṛha priya sadana sāsūrē*)—wherever Lord Ram ate anything by way of refreshment or a snack that is offered to an honourable guest (*bha'i jaba jaham̃ pahunā'ī*), he had always asserted in all these places that the sweetness and succulence that he had felt and the taste that he had enjoyed in the (ordinary) plums offered to him by Sabari were not experienced ever again by him anywhere else (no matter who offered what delicious dish to him) (*taba taham̃ kahi sabarīkē phalanikī ruci mādhurī na pā'ī*)!⁵

[⁵The Lord praised and clearly hinted that though the plums offered by Sabari were not so sweet as the refreshment he was offered to him at the aforesaid places, and may be the plums were a bit sour also, but nevertheless he greatly relished eating them so much so that there is no comparison between the way he enjoyed those plums to the countless dainty sweets and other delectables offered to him wherever he was invited as a guest, or even when he ate anything in his own home. The Lord declared

that he still remembered relishing the plums more than any one or all of these refreshments combined. Refer also to verse no. 183, stanza no. 2 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.

Sabari was an old tribal woman who loved the Lord extremely as if he were her beloved son. When the Lord visited her hermitage, she offered him ordinary plums, but her devotion and affection for the Lord was so stupendous and pure that the Lord relished eating these ordinary plums as if they were the sweetest thing he had ever eaten in his life. The Lord wanted to please Sabari as she had nothing better to offer. The bitterness of the plums was replaced with the nectar of sweetness of Sabari’s love and devotion for the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 35.] (4).

Oh Lord! When hermits, ascetics and sages start narrating your cosmic and truly divine form as the Supreme Being who is formless, attributeless, all-pervading cosmic Lord of this creation, the Lord who is the cause and an end of all creation, you blush and feel shy to hear yourself being praised so highly, and you bow your head in humbleness and modesty (*sahaja sarūpa kathā muni baranata rahata sakuci sira nāī*).

But when lowly creatures such as monkeys (led by their king Sugriv) and Kewat (the boatman) call you a ‘friend’ or ‘brother’, you feel proud and obliged to them as if you were being honoured or praised immensely in a public forum (*kēvaṭa mīta kahē sukha mānata bānara bandhu barāī*)⁶.

[⁶The greatness and the glory of Lord Ram lie in the fact that he feels joy at being recognised as a friend and a brother of ordinary creatures, those who are simple, humble and meek, and not in being praised by learned sages for being the Supreme and Almighty Lord of the world.] (5).

‘Oh Brother (*bhāī*)! [Tulsidas addresses the world in general here by calling all those who care to listen to him as his ‘brother’.] There is no one in all the three Lokas (the three divisions of the world; the heaven, the earth and the nether world) and the three time-periods (past, present, future) who can be easily endeared by or remains under the influence of pure love and devotion more than Lord Sri Ram (*prēma-kanaurō rāmasō prabhu tribhuvana tihumkāla na*).

It so happened that the Lord even went to the extent of declaring to Hanuman (who was a junior member of the monkey army that helped Lord Ram overcome the demons of Lanka), “I am highly indebted and obliged to you” (*tērō rinī haurī kahyō kapi sōī*)⁷.

Say then, who else is there in this world except Lord Ram who can be so easily obliged and who would feel so easily grateful for even the smallest of services rendered unto him by even the most ordinary and humblest of creatures (*aisī mānihi kō sēvakāī*)?’

[⁷Refer: (a) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 100, stanza no. 7; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33 (when Hanuman had brought the news of Sita from Lanka); and Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 62 when Hanuman had brought the herb which helped to revive Laxman back to life.] (6).

[Now, addressing himself, Tulsidas says—] ‘Oh Tulsidas! Even after seeing or observing or learning about such a lovable, endearing, affectionate, gracious and obliging nature and temperment of Lord Ram, about the Lord’s exemplary virtues, his warm and welcoming nature, and his noble characters (*tulasī rāma-sanēha-sīla lakhi*), if devotion does not arise in your heart for the Lord (*jō na bhagati ura āī*)—then surely your mother had wasted her adulthood in conceiving and giving birth to you (*tau tōhim janami jāya janani jāra tanu-tarunatā gavāmī*)!’⁸

[⁸Here Tulsidas addresses himself to say that it is worthless for him to have taken birth, and it would have been better if his mother had not conceived him at all or had aborted him if he did not or could not develop devotion, faith, love and affection for Lord Sri Ram.

To wit, if a person does not have the virtues of devotion and love for the Lord God in his heart, then he has achieved nothing worthwhile in this life, and his birth is like an animal that only gives pain to its mother at the time of birth and leads a meaningless gross form of life in pursuing sensual pleasures till the time death overtakes it.] (7).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Rāma Shows Favour to the Humble and the Poor

(165)

रघुबर रावरि यहै बड़ाई ।
निदरि गनी आदर गरीब पर, करत कृपा अधिकाई ॥1॥
थके देव साधन करि सब, सपनेहु नहिं देत दिखाई ।
केवट कुटिल भालु कपि कौनप, कियो सकल सँग भाई ॥2॥
मिलि मुनिबृंद फिरत दंडक बन, सो चरचौ न चलाई ।
बारहि बार गीध सबरीकी बरनत प्रीति सुहाई ॥3॥
स्वान कहे तें कियो पुर बाहिर, जती गयंद चढ़ाई ।
तिय—निंदक मतिमंद प्रजा रज निज नय नगर बसाई ॥4॥
यहि दरबार दीनको आदर, रीति सदा चलि आई ।
दीनदयालु दीन तुलसीकी काहु न सुरति कराई ॥5॥

(165)

raghubara rāvari yahai barāī.
nidari ganī ādara garība para, karata kṛpā adhikāī. 1.
thakē dēva sādhana kari saba, sapanēhu nahim dēta dikhāī.
kēvaṭa kuṭila bhālu kapi kaunapa, kiyō sakala samṅa bhāī. 2.
mili munibr̥nda phirata daṇḍaka bana, sō caracai na calāī.
bārahi bāra gīdha sabarīkī baranata prīti suhāī. 3.
svāna kahē tēm kiyō pura bāhira, jatī gayanda caṛhāī.

tiya-nindaka matimanda prajā raja nija naya nagara basā'ī. 4.
 yahi darabāra dīnakō ādara, rīti sadā cali ā'ī.
 dīnadayālu dīna tulasīkī kāhu na surati karā'ī. 5.

Verse no. 165—Oh Lord Raghubara (Lord Ram, the great Lord of King Raghu's line)! Your Lordship's special quality for which you are so famed, praised, honoured and respected (rāvāri yahai barā'ī) is that you pay more attention and show greater respect to those who are poor, humble, meek and helpless as compared to those who are rich, arrogant, proud and able (nidari ganī ādara garība para, karata kṛpā adhikā'ī) (1).

The Gods became tired of trying various means to please you, but you did not give them an opportunity to see your divine form even in their dreams (thakē dēva sādhana kari saba, sapanēhu nahim dēta dikhā'ī). [To wit, you did not oblige them as they were proud of being all-able and exalted 'Gods' who regarded themselves as superior from other living beings in this creation.]

On the contrary, you had established brotherly relations (kiyō sakala samṅa bhā'ī) with Nishad (the boatman) who was of a low birth, as well as with others who were lowly, deceitful and dishonourable such as the monkeys (such as Sugriv and his companions), the bears (such as Jamvant and his group), and the demon (Vibhishan, the brother of Ravana, the king of demons of Lanka) (simply because they were humble, meek, lowly, distressed and unpretentious) (kēvaṭa kuṭila bhālu kapi kaunapa) (2).

You had wandered in the Dandakarnya forest among and accompanied by hermits, ascetics and sages, but you never talked of them and the affection they had shown to you (mili munibrnda phirata daṇḍaka bana, sō caracai na calā'ī)¹.

On the contrary, you always loved to talk about the devotion and affection that the vulture (Jatau) and Sabari (the lowly Bhil woman) had for you, and you had repeatedly mentioned these events fondly later on (bārahi bāra gīdha sabarīkī baranata prīti suhā'ī)².

[¹You met countless self-realised and wise sages and hermits and ascetics while you roamed in the forest; you lived amongst them and had even gone to their hermitages to seek their blessings. But you never gave them importance nor praised them publicly for their wisdom and spiritual achievements, nor did you make any special reference to them later on. You knew that these exalted ones were already well-known and respected in the world, and to some degree they were aware and proud of their knowledge and spiritual achievements. All these great souls felt extremely privileged meeting you and spending some time with you; they had showered their love and affection upon you. But you did not give much of a weightage to them or their love for you because you never thought it so important as to recall these events later on when you recounted your experiences in the forest.

But when it came to the events associated with the vulture named Jatau and the tribal woman called Sabari, you were thrilled and overcome with tender feelings for them whenever you remembered later on in life. You never had enough while narrating their love and devotion for you.

³These two were very lowly by birth. In fact, they were no comparison to the greatness of the sages, hermits and ascetics whom you met. But you chose to praise these two individuals for their devotion and affection for you simply because they

were lowly, humble and poor, and they had nothing to show vis-à-vis their spiritual achievements or nearness to you except that they loved you and had deep devotion for you. They weren't proud of anything because they didn't have anything to be proud of. So you showed them preference and special favour so they would not feel shy, humble and humiliated before others for lack of any worthwhile spiritual merit, and could enjoy the same spiritual joy and bliss that the great sages, hermits and ascetics got by meditating upon your divine form and repeating your holy name.] (3).

On the complaint of a lowly and wretched dog, you had exiled an ascetic (who was a Brahmin) from the city (of Ayodhya) on the back of an elephant to deliver justice to the humble dog (so that this animal does not feel that you had not paid attention to its complain just because it was a humble animal and the offender was an able ascetic) (svāna kahē tēm kiyō pura bāhira, jatī gayanda caṛhāṭi)⁴.

On the contrary, you chose to rehabilitate the wicked and liar washerman, who had cast unsubstantiated aspersions and had made wild insinuations against your wife Sita, within the city itself by allowing him to stay there (instead of banishing him for his wild allegations and preposterous remarks against your wife), thinking that he was one of your humble subjects and he had nowhere to go should you punish him for his temerity and audacity for irreverent and impertinent to the extreme (tiya-nindaka matimanda prajā raja nija naya nagara basāṭi)⁵.

[⁴For the story of the 'dog', see a note appended to verse no. 146, stanza no. 5 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'. The Lord sent the ascetic out of the city on the 'back of an elephant' to show great respect to him because only a king would ride on an elephant. He wished to convey the idea that he had nothing personal against this ascetic and held him in high esteem by making him sit on an elephant like a king while sending him out of the kingdom, but as the King of the realm it was his duty to do justice to the dog who complained against the ascetic.

⁵For the story of the 'washerman', see a note appended to verse no. 152, stanza no. 10 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'. Although the Lord knew that this evil fellow was lying to the hilt and normally he should have taken him severely to task for such grave misdemeanour by punishing him by sending him to exile out of his kingdom, but Lord Ram thought that it would be unwise if he did this because then the world would assume that since the washerman was weak and humble the Lord used his might and authority to shut him up though the Lord felt guilty of some misdoings as this washerman had accused him of doing, i.e. of accepting Sita in spite of her being immodest and getting corrupted while staying in the custody of the demons at Lanka.

Another reason for Lord Ram forgiving the washerman was that the latter was extremely poor and humble, and that he had no malafide intentions when he made these accusations against Sita while he was angry with his own wife, because the Lord knew one loses one's sense of bearing and conscientiousness under a spell of wild anger.] (4).

[This proves that—] In the court of Lord Sri Ram, it has been an established tradition to respect and show honour to the meek, the poor, the humble, the distressed and the lowly (yahi darabāra dīnakō ādara, rīti sadā calī āṭi).

[Tulsidas says—] 'Oh merciful and gracious Lord, has no one ever reminded you of this wretched, humble and most lowly Tulsidas till now (dīnadayālu dīna tulasikī kāhu na surati karāṭi)? [Tell me Lord, if it is a fact that those who are humble and poor, those who lack anything worthwhile in this world to boast of, are

welcomed and get due respect in your honourable court, then what is the reason you are neglecting me, for am I not one such fellow?]' (5).

[Note—It would be very interesting to note that the ideas expressed in this and other verses which describe the greatness of Lord Ram and his preference for the meek and the humble finds an echo in many verses of the Holy Bible. For instance, refer to St. Matthew, 5/5, 23/12; St. Luke, 14/11, 18/14.

Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Rāma's Benevolent, Merciful and Compassionate Nature

(166)

ऐसे राम दीन—हितकारी।
 अतिकोमल करुनानिधान बिनु कारन पर—उपकारी॥1॥
 साधन—हीन दीन निज अघ—बस, सिला भई मुनि—नारी।
 गृहतें गवनि परसि पद पावन घोर सापतें तारी॥2॥
 हिंसारत निषाद तामस बपु, पसु—समान बनचारी।
 भेंट्यो हृदय लगाइ प्रेमबस, नहीं कुल जाति बिचारी॥3॥
 जद्यपि द्रोह कियो सुरपति—सुत, कहि न जाय अति भारी।
 सकल लोक अवलोकि सोकहत, सरन गये भय टारी॥4॥
 बिहँग जोनि आमिष अहारपर, गीध कौन ब्रतधारी।
 जनक—समान क्रिया ताकी निज कर सब भाँति सँवारी॥5॥
 अधम जाति सबरी जोषित जड़, लोक—वेद तें न्यारी।
 जानि प्रीति, दै दरस कृपानिधि, सोउ रघुनाथ उधारी॥6॥
 कपि सुग्रीव बंधु—भय—व्याकुल, आयो सरन पुकारी।
 सहि न सके दारुन दुख जनके, हत्यो बालि, सहि गारी॥7॥
 रिपुको अनुज बिभीषन निसिचर, कौन भजन अधिकारी।
 सरन गये आगे है लीन्ह्यो भेंट्यो भुजा पसारी॥8॥
 असुभ होइ जिन्हके सुमिरे ते बानर रीछ बिकारी।
 बेद—बिदित पावन किये ते सब, महिमा नाथ! तुम्हारी॥9॥
 कहँ लगि कहौ दीन अगनित जिन्हकी तुम बिपति निवारी।
 कलिमल—ग्रसित दास—तुलसी पर, काहे कृपा बिसारी?॥10॥

(166)

aisē rāma dīna-hitakārī.

atikōmala karunānidhāna binu kārana para-upakārī. 1.

sādhana-hīna dīna nija agha-basa, silā bha'ī muni-nārī.

gr̥hatēm gavani parasi pada pāvana ghōra sāpatēm tāri. 2.

hinsārata niṣāda tāmāsa bapu, pasu-samāna banacārī.

bhēṇṭyō hr̥daya lagā'i prēmabasa, nahim kula jāti bicārī. 3.

jadyapi drōha kiyō surapati-suta, kahi na jāya ati bhārī.

sakala lōka avalōki sōkahata, sarana gayē bhaya ṭārī. 4.
 bihamṅa jōni āmiṣa ahārapara, gīdha kauna bratadhārī.
 janaka-samāna kriyā tākī nija kara saba bhāmṭi samṁvārī. 5.
 adhama jāti sabarī jōṣita jaṛa, lōka-vēda tēm n'yārī.
 jāni prīti, dai darasa kṛpānidhi, sō'u raghunātha udhārī. 6.
 kapi sugrīva bandhu-bhaya-vyākula, āyō sarana pukārī.
 sahi na sakē dārūna dukha janakē, hatyō bālī, sahi gārī. 7.
 ripukō anuja bibhīṣana nisicara, kauna bhajana adhikārī.
 sarana gayē āgē hvai līnhyōm bhēṇṭyō bhuṣā pasārī. 8.
 asubha hō'i jinhakē sumirē tē bānara rīcha bikārī.
 bēda-bidita pāvana kiyē tē saba, mahimā nātha! tumhārī. 9.
 kaham' lagi kahauṁ dīna aganita jinhakī tuma bipati nivārī.
 kalimala-grasita dāsa-tulasī para, kāhē kṛpā bisārī?. 10.

Verse no. 166—Lord Sri Ram is an unparalleled benefactor and well-wisher of the humble, the distressed, the meek, the weak and the lowly (aisē rāma dīna-hitakārī), for the Lord has an extremely kind, merciful and gracious temperament and a heart that is exceedingly soft, obliging and malleable (atikōmala), he is indeed a treasury of the grandest of all virtues such as mercy and compassion (karunānidhāna), and he does good to others selflessly, without any apparent cause to do so, or with any self-interest involved, and without seeking any thing in return, not even as much as a formal thanks from the beneficiary of his largesse (binu kārana para-upakārī)! (1).

[Now Tulsidas cites several examples to show how Lord Ram had been extremely gracious towards so many souls who were all distressed and in great suffering, and had benefited them by granting them boons or rewards that they had never imagined in their lives that they would ever get. In this context, the reader is advised to refer also to verse no. 215 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

The wife of the sage (Gautam; a reference to 'Ahilya'), who was humble and devoid of any spiritual merit, prowess or means, had become a stone due to her own misadventures and sins (sādhana-hīna dīna nija agha-basa, silā bha'ī muni-nārī).

You had gone all the way to her from your home (Ayodhya) to liberate her from her terrible curse and purifying her by touching that stone by your holy feet (gr̥hatēm gavani parasi pada pāvana ghōra sāpatēm tārī)¹.

[¹This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.] (2).

The Guha-Nishad (the boatman)—who indulged in violence (killing, hunting), had a sinful and vile body and wandered in the forest like a wild animal (i.e. as a savage) (hinsārata niṣāda tāmāsa bapu, pasu-samāna banacārī)—was embraced by you due to his affections, regard and pure love for you (bhēṇṭyō hṛdaya lagā'i prēmabasa), and you had shown affection to him without even considering about his low caste and vile deeds (prēmabasa, nahim kula jāti bicārī)².

[²This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 20.] (3).

Though Jayant, the son of Indra, created unwarranted and unprovoked animosity with you (Lord Ram) by committing such a grave crime that it cannot be described in words (by assuming a form of a crow and pricking Sita with his beak so that she bled), a crime that made him unpardonable (*jadyapi drōha kiyō surapati-suta, kahi na jāya ati bhārī*)—yet when he ran around in all the worlds full of utter distress in order to hide and seek shelter from the fear of death (by the head-less arrow that you had shot at him, and which was pursuing him relentlessly wherever he went to hide and escape from its wrath), he found neither any place where he could hide nor anyone who would give him protection (*sakala lōka avalōki sōkahata*). So at last when he finally decided to come back to you and surrendered at your holy feet to seek pardon and mercy, you had shown exemplary tolerance and forgiveness by excusing him and removing his fear of death (i.e. sparing his life) (*sarana gayē bhaya tārī*)³.

[³This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 2.] (4).

The vulture Jatau was born as a bird and partook meat and flesh (of dead animals)—say, which good or righteous deed, ritual or other means had he done or what spiritual merit he had got (*bihamṅa jōni āmiṣa ahārapara, gīdha kauna bratadhārī*) by the good effects of which you had performed his last rites (his funeral or cremation) with your own hands like he were your own father (*janaka-samāna kriyā tākī nija kara*), and capped this gesture by giving him emancipation and salvation (a privilege that was denied to even your own worldly father, king Dasrath, as well as countless sages, hermits and ascetics who had spent their entire lives doing so many sacrifices and practicing so many spiritual doctrines) (*saba bhāmṭi samvārī*)?⁴

[⁴This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33.] (5).

Sabari was a woman of low caste, ignorant and stupid, who was castigated and expelled by the society as well as excommunicated by the Vedas because she violated the principles of meritorious life these scriptures have laid down (*adhama jāti sabarī jōṣita jara, lōka-vēda tēm n'yārī*). [The Vedas did not sanction any means which could lead her to salvation; so she was exiled to spend the rest of her life as a recluse in a forest.]

But realising her predicament, and her true faith, devotion and affection, Sri Ram had given her his Darshan (divine viewing) and had liberated her (*jāni prīti, dai darasa krpānidhi, sō'u raghunātha udhārī*)⁵.

[⁴This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.] (6).

When Sugriv, the monkey, was overwhelmed by fear caused to him by his brother Baali and came calling to seek refuge/shelter at your holy feet (i.e. when he sought your help) (*kapi sugrīva bandhu-bhaya-vyākula, āyō sarana pukārī*), you could not bear the extreme sorrows and miseries of someone who was now one of your dependents (refugee, follower, subordinate) (*sahī na sakē dārūna dukha janakē*) and so you had killed Baali even in the face of ignominy and a life-long blame that you would get by this act of yours (*hatyō bālī, sahī gārī*)⁵.

[⁵Baali had not caused any direct harm to Sri Ram, nor any other grave sin which deserved such a severe capital punishment as death. The quarrel with Sugriv

was a simple case of siblings fighting one another. As for Baali usurping Sugriv's wife, the latter did the same thing once he became the king after Baali's death. The killing of Baali was an ignominious blemish on Sri Ram for the rest of his life though it is true that Baali was granted emancipation and salvation by the Lord when he died[#].

This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kiskhindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 4—to [#]Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11.] (7).

Vibhishan was the brother of the demon enemy Ravana who was a cruel demon by birth (*ripukō anuja bibhīṣana nīsicara*); what devotion or worship worth the name had he done that made him qualified to receive grace from you (*kauna bhajana adhikārī*)?

But as soon as he came (as a refugee) at your holy feet, you came forward to welcome him and embraced him with open, outstretched arms (*sarana gayē āgē hvai līnhyōm bhēṇtyō bhujā pasārī*)⁶.

[⁶This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

Refer also to verse no. 215, stanza no. 5 of this book Vinai Patrika where it is clearly said that Lord Ram had affectionately embraced Vibhishan as if he was the Lord's own younger brother Bharat.] (8).

The monkeys and bears are so sinful, vile and evil that it is regarded as inauspicious and a bad omen even to pronounce their names and think of them during some auspicious event or time (*asubha hō'i jinhakē sumirē tē bānara rīcha bikārī*); but oh Lord (*nātha*), you had made all those sinners pure and respectful (*pāvana kiyē tē saba*).

It is well documented in Vedas which bear witness to it (*bēda-bidita*), and this is your Lordship's glory, fame and reputation for which you are so famous (*mahimā nātha! tumhārī*)⁷.

[⁷Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 18.

Refer also to the following verses of this book Vinai Patrika: verse no. 164, stanza no. 5; verse no. 193, stanza no. 5; verse no. 215, stanza no. 6.] (9).

How far can I say (*kaham̐ lagi kahaum̐*)? There are numerous such distressed, miserable and humble ones whose miseries, troubles and tribulations have been removed or eliminated by you (*dīna aganita jinhakī tuma bipati nivārī*)⁸, but I don't know why you have forgotten to show the same mercy and graciousness towards this Tulsidas who is overpowered and bound in fetters by the present era known as Kaliyug which has shackled and girdled him (Tulsidas) by sins, perversions, evil tendencies and so on and so forth that are so typical of Kaliyug (*kalimala-grasita dāsa-tulasī para, kāhē krpā bisārī*)?

[⁸Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 18.] (10).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Devotion and Worship of Lord Rāma in Vedantic context

(167)

रघुपति-भगति करत कठिनाई ।
 कहत सुगम करनी अपार जानै सोइ जेहि बनि आई ।।1।।
 जो जेहि कला कुसल ताकहँ सोइ सुलभ सदा सुखकारी ।
 सफरी सनमुख जल-प्रवाह सुरसरी बहै गज भारी ।।2।।
 ज्यों सर्करा मिलै सिकता महँ, बलतें न कोउ बिलगावै ।
 अति रसग्य सूच्छम पिपीलिका, बिनु प्रयास ही पावै ।।3।।
 सकल दृश्य निज उदर मेलि, सोवै निद्रा तजि जोगी ।
 सोइ हरिपद अनुभवै परम सुख, अतिसय द्वैत-बियोगी ।।4।।
 सोक मोह भय हरष दिवस-निसि देस-काल तहँ नाहीं ।
 तुलसीदास यहि दसाहीन संसय निरमूल न जाहीं ।।5।।

(167)

raghupati-bhagati karata kaṭhinā'ī.
 kahata sugama karanī apāra jānai sō'i jēhi bani ā'ī. 1.
 jō jēhi kalā kusala tākaham' sō'i sulabha sadā sukhakārī.
 sapharī sanamukha jala-pravāha surasarī bahai gaja bhārī. 2.
 jyōm sarkarā milai sikatā maham', balatēm na kō'u bilagāvai.
 ati rasagya sūcchama pipīlikā, binu prayāsa hī pāvai. 3.
 sakala dṛśya nija udara mēli, sōvai nidrā taji jōgī.
 sō'i haripada anubhavai parama sukha, atisaya dvaita-biyōgī. 4.
 sōka mōha bhaya haraṣa divasa-nisi dēsa-kāla taham' nāhīm.
 tulasīdāsa yahi dasāhīna sansaya niramūla na jāhīm. 5.

Verse no. 167—It is very difficult to have true and unadulterated devotion for Lord Sri Ram and worship him in the true sense with total sincerity (raghupati-bhagati karata kaṭhinā'ī)—it is easy said than done; it is easy to preach about it but a Herculean task to practice what one preaches (kahata sugama karanī apāra). Only a person who has successfully done it knows the truth of this statement (jānai sō'i jēhi bani ā'ī) (1).

If anyone is expert in an art and skilled in a craft, if anyone knows how to tackle something no matter how complicated or difficult to handle it is (jō jēhi kalā kusala), it is only then that doing that thing becomes both easy and a source of joy for him (tākaham' sō'i sulabha sadā sukhakārī). [To wit, when someone is skilled in doing something difficult or complicated, he would enjoy doing it and not shy away from it.]

For instance, a small fish can comfortably and easily face (i.e. swim against, and even cross) the swift currents of river Ganges (sapharī sanamukha jala-

pravāha surasarī), while a big elephant gets drowned or washed away by the same current (for it is not accustomed to living in water and does not know how to tackle its swiftly changing manners) (surasarī bahai gaja bhārī)¹.

[¹The water is a natural habitat of the fish; it is at home in it. So therefore the fish is fully accustomed to the environment of the water, and becomes an expert in tackling the rapidly changing behaviour and contours of its natural habitat. On the other hand, the elephant lives on solid ground which is able to support its mighty weight, so as soon as it enters the water of a river it feels that there is no solid ground under its feet which seem to sink under the water, making the elephant lose its balance and topple over. Since the elephant does not know how to swim, it it would topple over and drown in the swift currents of the river. So while the fish can easily swim and survive in the swift current of a river, the elephant would find its grave in it.] (2).

If sugar is mixed with coarse sand particles then it is not possible to separate them no matter hard one tries to do it (jyōm sarkarā milai sikatā maham, balatēm na kō'u bilagāvai), but a small ant, which knows the secret art of how to separate sugar from any mixture, would easily and effortlessly eat the sugar or carry away its particles while leaving behind the other component of that mixture (ati rasagya sūcchama pipīlikā, binu prayāsa hī pāvai) (3).

A wise and enlightened Yogi (an ascetic who practices meditation and contemplation) who has become 'self-realised', turns inwards to realise that the entire spectrum of the gross visible world is nothing but a manifestation of the 'Self' that also resides inside his own inner-being as his own 'self' that is known as the Atma which is pure consciousness, and therefore he is able to visualise the world in his inner-self (sakala dr̥śya nija udara mēli)—such an ascetic would live in a state of trance obtained by perpetual bliss arising out of this understanding so much so it that would make him appear as one who is asleep, though he is wide awake (sōvai nidrā taji jōgi)².

[²This state of being is actually a state of transcendental existence where the ascetic has abandoned the delusions associated with this gross world, with its accompanying agitations and confusions, that results in making him calm and serene, giving the impression that he is asleep, whereas actually he is wide awake by keeping himself aloof from the delusions and all ignorance associated with the external gross world unlike a person who remains deeply engrossed in the affairs of this external mundane world which creates the impression that he is 'awake' while the fact is that such an ignorant person is 'asleep' as he is out of touch with the reality of existence.]

Hence, such a self-realised and enlightened Yogi frees himself internally from all delusions caused by the concept of 'Dwaita' or duality in creation (atisaya dvaita-biyōgi), and as a result he personally experiences and enjoys the eternal bliss and beatitude that comes with attainment of the supreme state of transcendental spiritual existence that is equivalent to access to 'Hari-pad', or the highest level of spiritual being (sō'i haripada anubhavai parama sukha)³.

[³This stanza is based on the eclectic metaphysical philosophy of Vedanta that states, inter-alia, that whatever that exists in this creation is caused as a revelation of the cosmic 'Self' which is pure Consciousness. It is this 'Consciousness' that has decided for itself that there should be a physical world, and hence if the former so wishes, this world would vanish. This is because the gross world is merely a creation of 'wish' of the 'Self', and hence it is illusory. To treat such a world as being 'real' and get involved in it is 'delusion'. To get agitated by such a delusory world's

problems, to find attraction in this world's charms, to think that this world will give peace and lasting happiness or joy is like living in a dream that cannot ever be realised. A wise and enlightened ascetic knows these facts, and therefore keeps himself away from this world. He practices and learns to experience bliss and happiness by meditating upon his own 'self', or the Atma which is pure consciousness that has the same 'gene' as the cosmic Self or the cosmic Atma known as the 'Parmatma' or the Supreme Being.

Having thus freed himself from the myriad problems associated with worldly delusions which is like living in a restless sleep of dreams (ignorance, illusions etc.), such a Yogi becomes peaceful as if he is sleeping blissfully in the 'deep-sleep state (Turiya) of consciousness'. He is freed from the confusions and perplexities caused by the concept of 'Dwaita' (duality or the two aspects of something that makes a person utterly vexed). Obviously he experiences calmness and tranquillity of the highest order that comes only with 'self-realisation and being enlightened about the Truth'.] (4).

In this glorious and eclectic state of transcendental existence (where delusions have been overcome and bliss, tranquillity and beatitude prevails), there is no trace of *sōka mōha bhaya haraṣa* (sorrows, delusions, attractions, fears and a false sense of joy respectively) any time of the day and the night (*divasa-nisi -- taham' nāhīm*).

It is a perpetual and steady state of calm and blissful existence which do not depend upon varying situations and different times (*dēsa-kāla taham' nāhīm*). [To wit, a Yogi would be able to maintain his equanimity and calmness in all situations, and no adversities or favourable circumstances would ever be able to either agitate him or make him excited in the least.]

Tulsidas asserts that till the time this enlightened state of mind is achieved, it is not possible to overcome and rout all doubts, dilemmas, consternations and confusions that dominate a person's mind and intellect (*tulasīdāsa yahi dasāhīna sansaya niramūla na jāhīm*). [To wit, it is not easily possible to overcome worldly delusions in their entirety if one is not fully enlightened about the Truth.] (5).

[Note :- Stanza Nos. 4 and 5 describe the essence of the Vedantic precepts, philosophy and knowledge. They are highly philosophic as well as empirical in nature. One must note that this shows that though Tulsidas' main thrust was on devotion and worship of the formed variant of the 'absolute truth' which is formless, macrocosmic, all-pervading and attributeless, yet the poet is neither unaware nor neglects the philosophy of Vedanta; infact, on a close analysis of this verse, one finds that Tulsidas has laid emphasis—albeit indirectly—on the relevance and highly effectiveness of the Vedantic concept of salvation and emancipation. He also brings home the point that Sri Ram, whom he worships himself and advises others to do, is not an ordinary human, but the supreme Vedantic Lord recognised as and called by the name of Sri Ram for easy accessibility and understanding. This is exactly what the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad says. This verse would establish that Tulsidas was well versed in the wonderful spiritual concepts of Vedanta.]

Reasons for Miseries

जोपै राम—चरन—रति होती ।
 तौ कत त्रिविध सूल निसिबासर सहते बिपति निसोती ।।1।।
 जो संतोष—सुधा निसिबासर सपनेहुँ कबहुँक पावै ।
 तौ कत बिषय बिलोकि झूठ जल मन—कुरंग ज्यों धावै ।।2।।
 जो श्रीपति—महिमा बिचारि उर भजते भाव बढ़ाए ।
 तौ कत द्वार—द्वार कूकर ज्यों फिरते पेट खलाए ।।3।।
 जे लोलुप भये दास आसके ते सबहीके चेरें ।
 प्रभु—बिस्वास आस जीती जिन्ह, ते सेवक हरि करे ।।4।।
 नहिं एकौ आचरन भजनको, बिनय करत हौं ताते ।
 कीजै कृपा दासतुलसी पर, नाथ नामके नाते ।।5।।

(168)

jōpai rāma-carana-rati hōtī.
 tau kata trividha sūla nisibāsara sahatē bipati nisōtī. 1.
 jō santōṣa-sudhā nisibāsara sapanēhumṁ kabahumṁka pāvai.
 tau kata biṣaya bilōki jhūmṁṭha jala mana-kuraṅga jyōm dhāvai. 2.
 jō śrīpati-mahimā bicāri ura bhajatē bhāva barhā'ē.
 tau kata dvāra-dvāra kūkara jyōm phiratē pēṭa khalā'ē. 3.
 jē lōlupa bhayē dāsa āsakē tē sabahīkē cērē.
 prabhu-bisvāsa āsa jīti jinha, tē sēvaka hari kērē. 4.
 nahim ēkau ācarana bhajanakō, binaya karata haurṁ tātē.
 kījai kṛpā dāsatulasī para, nātha nāmakē nātē. 5.

Verse no. 168—If one had true love, affection and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (jōpai rāma-carana-rati hōtī), why would he then have to suffer day and night from the three types of torments¹ that are associated with life in this gross mundane and transient world of transmigration (tau kata trividha sūla nisibāsara sahatē)? Why would he have to suffer from such severe and exhausting miseries that he is being subjected to in his life without any tangible sign of relief or let-up from his predicaments (sahatē bipati nisōtī)? (1).

[¹These three torments are the following—Adhyatmik or those related to his spiritual peace and welfare; Adhibhautik or those related to the world and those with whom a person has to interact in it; and Adidaivik or problems related to unfavourable stars and gods. Refer also: Vinai Patrika, verse no. 17, stanza no. 2; verse no. 81, stanza no. 1 etc.]

If the mind gets to taste the bliss that comes with the nectar of contentedness and desirelessness even in its dreams (jō santōṣa-sudhā nisibāsara sapanēhumṁ kabahumṁka pāvai), then why would it unnecessarily and aimlessly run like a thirsty deer behind the water of the mirage symbolised by the tempting sense objects of this material but deluding world (tau kata biṣaya bilōki jhūmṁṭha jala mana-kuraṅga jyōm dhāvai)?²

[²The 'deer' is an animal which lacks wisdom to decide what is true and what is false unlike a human being who has basic intelligence to determine what is good for him and what is not. When a thirsty animal sees a mirage in a desert it would run

towards it thinking that it would get water to drink and quench its thirst, not realising that the water seen in a hot desert is merely an optical illusion and it is futile running for it. On the other hand, a man who knows basic science would not fall in this trap.

Tulsidas means here that a wise man is one who knows that peace and happiness comes not by seeking them from the gross material things in this deluding world, but in turning inwards and inculcating contentedness. Besides this, one would be wiser if he seeks bliss and happiness by having devotion for Lord Ram instead of seeking them from the world because it is like seeking water in a desert mirage.] (2).

If one would have duly understood in one's mind the glories of Lord Sripati and the importance of having true devotion for the Lord, if one had enhanced affection for the Lord in one's heart and had worshipped him sincerely (jō śrīpati-mahimā bicāri ura bhajatē bhāva barḥā'ē)—then say, why would he have to go begging from door to door like a dog to feed his stomach (tau kata dvāra-dvāra kūkara jyōm phiratē pēṭa khalā'ē)¹?

[¹To wit, if one had sought from the Lord and prayed to him, the Lord would be obliged to take care of all his needs and well-being as it is the Lord's word of honour and commitment that he would look after his devotees and those who surrender themselves before him. Lord Sripati is the 'Lord of wealth' (śrī + pati), and so wouldn't he provide for all of us if he finds that we are dependent upon him? Why, just think, would he let his grand reputation in this regard be tarnished and subject himself to abject ridicule and scrutiny by not taking proper care of his dependents who are his subjects, his devotees, his followers and his subordinates.] (3).

The greedy ones who have allowed themselves to be overcome by worldly hopes, desires and expectations are as good as slaves of all for all practical purposes (jē lōlupa bhayē dāsa āsakē tē sabahikē cērē). [They will go to any length to fulfil their desires, keeping aside all probity, propriety and righteousness. They would stoop to any low and meanness if doing it would satisfy their desires and give them what they long for, what they covet. They become an easy target for the selfish world which needs such needy persons who would do the bidding of the world in order to satisfy their greeds and temptations.]

On the other hand, those who have vanquished desires, hopes and expectations by relying solely on (the strength of) the Lord God are the ones who can be truly called the servants (devotees, followers) of the Lord (prabhu-bisvāsa āsa jīti jinha, tē sēvaka hari kērē). [Such persons are free from all fetters caused by greed and temptations that bind ordinary people to the gross world of material sense objects along with its delusions and false charms. Such wise persons are therefore free from all miseries and troubles associated with this world because they have no desires and expectations from it, and they are just like a free man who is not under any kind of bondage.] (4).

Oh Lord! I am pleading and praying earnestly before you because I do not have any of the characteristics associated with a true devotee who has devotion, faith and affection for you or who worships you (nahim ēkau ācarana bhajanakō, binaya karata haurm tātē).

[But oh Lord, I at least do one thing, which is to keep on constantly chanting your holy name, day and night. Therefore—] Oh Lord, please show mercy, kindness, benevolence and compassion on this humble Tulsidas only because of this one

factor—viz. that I relentlessly repeat your divine and holy name (kījai krpā dāsatulasī para, nātha nāmakē nātē)³.

[³Tulsidas stresses the importance of Lord Ram's holy name here. He says that even if a person has no other spiritual skills and knows of no other way that can help him overcome miseries and problems associated with his life in this world, then the easiest and simplest path for him would be to remember Lord Ram and repeat his holy name constantly. This simple mean would be sufficient to take care of his spiritual welfare, and give him liberation and deliverance from his miseries.] (5).

Tulasīdāsa pleads with Lord Śrī Rāma

(169)

जो मोहि राम लागते मीढे ।
तौ नवरस षटरस—रस अनरस है जाते सब सीढे ॥1॥
बंचक बिषय बिबिध तनु धरि अनुभवे सुने अरु डीढे ।
यह जानत हौं हृदय आपने सपने न अघाइ उबीढे ॥2॥
तुलसिदास प्रभु सों एकहि बल बचन कहत अति ढीढे ।
नामकी लाज राम करुनाकर केहि न दिये कर चीढे ॥3॥

(169)

jō mōhi rāma lāgatē mīṭhē.

tau navarasa ṣaṭarasa-rasa anarasa hvai jātē saba sīṭhē. 1.
baṅcaka biṣaya bibidha tanu dhari anubhavē sunē aru ḍīṭhē.
yaha jānata haum̐ hr̥daya āpanē sapanē na aghā'i ubīṭhē. 2.
tulasidāsa prabhu sōm̐ ēkahi bala bacana kahata ati ḍhīṭhē.
nāmakī lāja rāma karunākara kēhi na diyē kara cīṭhē. 3.

Verse no. 169—If I had been lucky enough that Lord Ram would appear sweet, pleasant, kind, dear and lovable to me (jō mōhi rāma lāgatē mīṭhē), then why would I have been attracted to the charms of the world because all its famed nine as well as six 'Rasas' (attractions; charms; temptations) would have seemed sour to me instead of the way they appear sweet to me at present (tau navarasa ṣaṭarasa-rasa anarasa hvai jātē saba sīṭhē)?¹

[¹The "Rasas" mentioned here in this verse are of two types—viz. (i) the 'nine Rasas', and (ii) the 'six Rasas'.

(i) The 'nine Rasas' mentioned here refer to the nine branches in which the entire body of classical Indian literature has been classified depending on the genre and style of composition of each writing, whether it is prose, poetry or drama. Each of these nine Rasas has its unique attraction and charm, and literature is classified either as belonging exclusive to one of the Rasas, or of a mixed genre that incorporates more than one Rasa.

The Rasas of literature are categorised into nine types as follows: Srīngar (description of beauty, glamour, specially physical), Hasya (comedy, funny, satire, hilarious), Karuna (pitiful, merciful, sorrowful, mournful), Veer (bravery, valour,

courage), Rudra (ferocity, terrible, wrathful, calamitous, vengeance), Vibhatsa (repugnance, repulsive, hateful, abhorable, abominable), Adbhut (mysterious, unknown, strange, beyond imagination) and Shaant (tranquil, peaceful, placid, serene, blissful).

(ii) The ‘six Rasas’ meanwhile refer to the six types of taste of food. These are the following: Kadua (bitter), Tikha (biting, smarting), Mitha (sweet), Kasela (pungent), Khatta (sour) and Namkin (salty).

What Tulsidas means is that if a person has devotion for Lord Ram and is spiritually enlightened, then he will have no attractions for any of the tempting charms of this physical world of sense objects. He would derive so much depth of happiness and immensity of joy while remaining submerged in the thoughts of the Lord and the bliss that comes by attaining tranquillity that is inherent to this state of existence that the charms and attractions of the outside material world would automatically vanish.

Hence, if a person finds the world charming and its things attractive then naturally and obviously he has not tasted the superior nectar-like taste of bliss and beatitude, of happiness and joy, of ecstasy and delight that comes with self-realisation and devotion for Lord God.] (1).

I have witnessed and experienced personally, as well as have heard of and seen it all around me by virtue of my observations during my countless previous births (*bañcaka biṣaya bibidha tanu dhari anubhavē sunē aru dīṭhē*)—that the objects and pleasures of the mundane world are deceitful, misleading, illusionary and deluding; they trap a creature in an endless cycle of misery, pain, grief, troubles and tribulations. They are like cunning tricksters and imposters who pretend to be friends of innocent travellers, but rob them of whatever they have².

[²To wit, all the material things and sense objects of this world look so exceedingly charming and wonderfully alluring that an innocent person falls in their trap and gets attracted to them. Once they manage to trap the gullible person, the victim is then unable to get out of this vortex which sucks him in its whirlpool of miseries, grief, torments and troubles. And this trap is so robust and profound that it is well nigh impossible for the soul to break free once it is trapped.]

The irony is that though I am fully aware of it in my heart and know of its consequences in my mind (because I have experienced the horrors of this trap personally over countless births and have also witnessed others suffering from it), but I still never felt either fed-up or satisfied with the false charms and attractions of the material world even in my dreams (*yaha jānata haum̐ hṛdaya āpanē sapanē na aghā'i ubīṭhē*). [Am I not utterly stupid and dumb? Although I know fully well about the danger of getting tempted by the world and its sensual attractions, I still greed for them, I still covet them.] (2).

But inspite of his great shortcomings, defects and faults, Tulsidas has gathered enough courage by relying on (or on the strength of) Lord Ram's (gracious, merciful, kind and benevolent) nature (*prabhu sōm̐ ēkahi bala*), to boldly plead before the Lord (*bacana kahata ati dīṭhē*) as follows: ‘Oh Lord (Ram)! For the sake of upholding the sanctity, holiness, glory, fame, divinity and liberating power of your Great Name, you have written decrees (gave assurances; made declarations) in favour of so many lowly and humble creatures (that they be liberated from the vast ocean of this mundane existence and its accompanying horrors and miseries—just because they have invoked your holy name when they were in distress, though of course they had nothing else to show for themselves as being of any spiritual merit or worthy of

consideration for relief). Oh Lord, is it not (nāmakī lāja rāma karunākara kēhi na diyē kara cīṭhē)?³

[³To wit, oh Lord, there are legends of ordinary and most humble creatures who found peace and liberation from all their worldly and spiritual problems, who attained emancipation and salvation just by relying on the strength of your holy name though they had not done any worthwhile meritorious deed in their lives that could be cited for such great reward. Tell me Lord, is it not so? Well then, if this is the case, I have been chanting your name for so long—so, say, am I not entitled for emancipation and salvation like others; am I not eligible for your grace and mercy like these fortunate creatures. Tell me oh Lord, do I not come under the ambit of your own decree, of your own promises, that if anyone says your name and invokes you he is bound to get your attention that would ensure his freedom from all miseries and troubles, both related to his spiritual life as well as his temporal existence.

Really, one must appreciate Tulsidas' closeness and bond of affection with the Lord, for he has the courage and the audacity to even challenge his Lord Sri Ram and almost forcefully demand salvation and emancipation from him based on precedents like a lawyer would do in a court of law by citing earlier cases. Indeed, there is a remarkable level of devotion and faith in the Lord and his glorious name that are expressed here!

There is no element of fear in Tulsidas' mind of offending or antagonising the Lord by being persistent with his pleas, or appearing to be nagging at the Lord with his demands for liberation and deliverance—because Tulsidas is an ardent and a great devotee of the Lord, and so he feels confident that the Lord would never take him in the wrong light, that he has a sort of 'right of way' on his Lord, and that the Lord can never ever be angry at him for his constant proddings and pleadings.

Taken from a broader perspective, all the things said by the great and realised saint-poet Tulsidas in this book *Vinai Patrika* are not about himself but for the good of the world at large, for others, like a true guide, so as to show them the spiritual way and exhorting them to develop the virtues of love, devotion and faith in the Lord God for their own good and welfare. Towards this end, Tulsidas employs the method of self-criticism and self-appraisal, and of his own experiences and observations of life as this method is more convincing. It would show the world how Tulsidas managed to find his spiritual peace and liberation inspite of having a humble origin and having to face all the hurdles and problems that an ordinary person faces in his life.

Therefore, this book should be regarded as a simple spiritual guide by anyone who feels that he or she would not be able to fulfil or meet the stringent requirements as prescribed in the scriptures for attaining liberation and deliverance as well as obtaining peace and happiness in one's life. The path of love and devotion and faith for Lord Ram (i.e. the Lord God) as shown by Tulsidas is the easiest and the most convenient of all the known spiritual paths, of all the prescribed methods for one's own good and welfare from which one has a choice to pick and follow. Tulsidas has done the ground work for all spiritual aspirants and offered them the remedy virtually on a platter.] (3).

Regret at Lack of Devotion

यों मन कबहूँ तुमहिं न लाग्यो ।
 ज्यों छल छाँड़ि सुभाव निरंतर रहत बिषय अनुराग्यो ॥1॥
 ज्यों चितई परनारि, सुने पातक—प्रपंच घर—घरके ।
 त्यों न साधु, सुरसरि—तरंग—निरमल गुनगन रघुबरके ॥2॥
 ज्यों नासा सुगंधरस—बस, रसना पटरस—रति मानी ।
 राम—प्रसाद—माल जूठन लागि त्यों न ललकि ललचानी ॥3॥
 चंदन—चंदबदन—भूषन—पट ज्यों चह पाँवर परस्यो ।
 त्यों रघुपति—पद—पदुम—परस को तनु पातकी न तरस्यो ॥4॥
 ज्यों सब भाँति कुदेव कुठाकुर सेये बपु बचन हिये हूँ ।
 त्यों न राम सुकृतग्य जे सकुचत सकृत प्रनाम किये हूँ ॥5॥
 चंचल चरन लोभ लागि लोलुप द्वार—द्वार जग बागे ।
 राम—सीय—आश्रमनि चलत त्यों भये न श्रमित अभागे ॥6॥
 सकल अंग पद—बिमुख नाथ मुख नामकी ओट लई है ।
 है तुलसिहिं परतीति एक प्रभु—मूरति कृपामई है ॥7॥

(170)

yōm mana kabahūm̐ tumahim̐ na lāgyō.
 jyōm chala chām̐ḍi subhāva nirantara rahata biṣaya anurāgyō. 1.
 jyōm citaī paranāri, sunē pātaka-prapañca ghara-gharakē.
 tyōm na sādhu, surasari-taraṅga-niramala gunagana raghubarakē. 2.
 jyōm nāsā sugandharasa-basa, rasanā paṭarasa-rati mānī.
 rāma-prasāda-māla jūṭhana lagi tyōm na lalaki lalacānī. 3.
 candana-candabadani-bhūṣana-paṭa jyōm caha pām̐vara parasyō.
 tyōm raghupati-pada-paduma-parasa kō tanu pātakī na tarasyō. 4.
 jyōm saba bhām̐ti kudēva kuṭhākura sēyē bapu bacana hiyē hūm̐.
 tyōm na rāma sukṛtagya jē sakucata sakṛta pranāma kiyē hūm̐. 5.
 cañcala carana lōbha lagi lōlupa dvāra-dvāra jaga bāgē.
 rāma-sīya-āśramani calata tyōm bhayē na śramita abhāgē. 6.
 sakala aṅga pada-bimukha nātha mukha nāmakī ōṭa laī hai.
 hai tulasihim̐ paratīti ēka prabhu-mūrati kṛpāmāī hai. 7.

Verse no. 170—[Oh my Lord Ram, I sincerely regret that—] My Mana (mind and heart combined) has never concentrated or sincerely thought of you in the same way (yōm mana kabahūm̐ tumahim̐ na lāgyō) as it indulges whole heartedly, faithfully and as a matter of habit in the pleasures of the senses and their objects in the mundane, gross and materialistic world (jyōm chala chām̐ḍi subhāva nirantara rahata biṣaya anurāgyō) (1).

Like the way I wander about glancing lustfully and passionately at women, and listen to useless gossip and worthless tattle pertaining to the problems and domestic affairs of different households (jyōm citaī paranāri, sunē pātaka-prapañca ghara-gharakē), I had never had the time or an inclination for having a company of saints, nor did I spend some precious time to hear the virtuous glories of Lord Sri Ram, which are like the purifying currents of holy river Ganges, being narrated somewhere (tyōm na sādhu, surasari-taraṅga-niramala gunagana raghubarakē)¹.

[¹To wit, I could find time for and interest in pursuing women or listening to worldly talks, but I did not have time or the interest for saints or for hearing the narration of the holy stories of Lord Ram. How sorry I am, how unfortunate I am, and how regretful it is!] (2).

Like the manner in which the nose is accustomed to be enchanted or attracted by the sweet fragrances and scents of different kinds in this world (*jyōm nāsā sugandharasa-basa*), and the tongue loves to enjoy the six types of tastes of food (*rasanā paṭarasa-rati mānī*) [see verse no. 169], never has once the nose got attracted towards the fragrance of flowers from a garland that has been offered to the Lord, and neither has the tongue any desire to taste the Prasad (food offered to the Lord) with the same eagerness and zest with which they are attracted by worldly things (*rāma-prasāda-māla jūṭhana lagi tyōm na lalaki lalacānī*)².

[²The nose is naturally attracted to pleasant smell such as the sweet fragrance of flowers, but how nice and spiritually rewarding would it had been if the same natural habit of the nose was diverted to enjoy the fragrance emanating from the flowers of a garland that has been offered to the Lord God instead of finding attraction in garlands that are used for decoration and other worldly purposes.

The same thing applies to the tongue. It is accustomed to savour the taste of different dishes that one eats at home or outside, say in a restaurant, but the same tongue does not seem to enjoy the food that is offered to the deity and distributed as ‘Prasad’, for it finds it bland and tasteless.

What essentially is meant here is that if one is careful and conscientious, one can divert the ordinary and natural urges of the body and its different sense organs for his long term spiritual good instead of letting their energy and effort made by them go in waste by pursuing the world for self-gratification.] (3).

Like the way this mean and lowly body is so eager and longing to touch and enjoy the scent of sandalwood, the sensual pleasure derived by contact of a glamorous woman (“*candabadani*”; a woman who is glamorous and sensual, and beautiful like the Moon), and the pleasure obtained by wearing beautiful ornament and the comfort got by wearing clothes that are soft and delicate (*candana-candabadani-bhūṣana-paṭa jyōm caha pāmvara parasyō*)—the same body has never shown similar eagerness, similar earnestness, similar desire and zeal to touch the holy lotus-feet of Lord Sri Ram (*tyōm raghupati-pada-paduma-parasa kō tanu pātakī na tarasyō*)³.

[³The body likes to feel the pleasure and the thrill of touching sensual objects, things that seem pleasant and comforting and exciting, such as soft paste of sandalwood, a beautiful woman, costly ornaments and wonderful clothes, but regrettably it does not find any charm in touching the holy feet of the Lord God! Had it done so, it would have purified its self of all impurities that have got stuck to it by virtue of its indulgences in this gross world, resulting in all its miseries and sufferings that cause so much of grief to the creature being eliminated.] (4).

Like the way I had been sincerely serving, with all the strength of my body, my mind and my words, the various Gods of all denominations (referring to the countless gods of the pantheon that I have been paying obeisance to in my life, even the demi-gods

who were malignant and malevolent, or those so-called gods who are not even worthy to be called ‘God’ at all), as well as worldly lords and masters who were wicked, selfish and cruel (jyōm saba bhām̐ti kudēva kuṭhākura sēyē bapu bacana hiyē hūm̐)—regrettably, I had never done that kind of service to Lord Sri Ram who would have regarded himself as being indebted and obliged to me for it; Lord Ram would have felt grateful to me if I had done for the Lord only a fraction of that service which I had done for other gods and worldly lords. Verily and in all sooth, the merciful and gracious Lord Ram would have felt shy and humbled out of modesty as soon as I would have merely bowed my head before him (tyōm na rāma sukṛtagya jē sakucata sakṛta pranāma kiyē hūm̐)⁴.

[⁴Tulsidas says that a creature wastes his time and energy in trying to appease so many deities and masters in order to fulfil his mundane wishes. He tries hard and bends almost backwards, falls on his knees and prostrates himself before them, but these gods and masters are all selfish and they only exploit the creature’s suffering and compulsions by forcing him to do their bidding. These gods and worldly lords demand more and more of praises, offerings, services and commitments from the distressed creature in an exploitative manner.

On the other hand if a desirous person approaches Lord Ram and just bows before the Lord, he would be surprised to see that the Lord is ever-ready to go out of his way to fulfil all his wishes selflessly, and give him more than what he expects. Lord Ram does not like appeasements, pamperings and praises being heaped upon him for getting favourable towards any creature like is the habit with other gods and lords of this world. But the irony is that a suffering person would rather serve other gods and beg before worldly lords and masters instead of surrendering before Lord Ram.] (5).

Like the way these restless feet of mine had become weary by greedily and wistfully roaming from door to door to beg and got kicked in the process (i.e. I was humiliated, insulted, censored, reproached and rebuked everywhere, but I never got tired of going here and there seeking from the world) (cañcala carana lōbha lagi lōlupa dvāra-dvāra jaga bāgē)—it had never tired itself by visiting holy places associated with Lord Sri Sita-Ram even in its dreams (i.e. I had never even dreamt of going on a pilgrimage) (rāma-sīya-āśramani calata tyōm bhayē na śramita abhāgē)⁵.

[⁵Tulsidas means that a person goes everywhere for his livelihood, for fulfilment of worldly obligations or even for recreation, but rarely will a person find time to go on a pilgrimage to a holy place.] (6).

Oh Lord, in this way all the units of my body are opposed to your holy feet (sakala aṅga pada-bimukha nātha). [To wit, I have never used my body to serve and worship you. All the time and energy of the sense organs of my body were spent in self-gratification and seeking comfort from the respective sense objects of the world.]

But fortunately for me there is one wonderful exception, and it has come to my rescue. [What is it?] It is only this mouth of mine that I can now rely upon as a last refuge when all other sense organs of my body have betrayed me. For in all sooth, it is through this ‘mouth’ that I have managed to utter your holy name and plead before you that I have come to seek refuge and shelter at your holy feet (ēka mukha

nāmakī ōṭa la'ī hai) as I have a firm conviction and faith that your divine form is an embodiment of mercy, grace, benevolence, compassion and kindness (hai tulasihim paratīti ēka prabhu-mūrati kṛpāma'ī hai)⁶.

[⁶Tulsidas means that he has firm belief that Lord Ram is so merciful and kind that inspite of knowing that a creature has used his body in serving the world, in self-gratification, and doing nothing that is spiritually meritorious, yet if he invokes Lord Ram's glorious name and seeks pardon from the Lord for all his mischief and transgressions in life, the Lord is more than willing to accept such a creature.] (7).

Tulasīdāsa' Humility

(171)

कीजै मोको जमजातनामई ।
 राम! तुमसे सुचि सुहृद साहिबहिं, मैं सठ पीठि दर्ई ॥1॥
 गरभबास दस मास पालि पितु-मातु-रूप हित कीन्हों ।
 जड़हिं बिबेक, सुसील खलहिं, अपराधिहिं आदर दीन्हों ॥2॥
 कपट करौं अंतरजामिहुँ सों, अघ ब्यापकहिं दुरावों ।
 ऐसेहु कुमति कुसेवक पर रघुपति न कियो मन बाबों ॥3॥
 उदर भरौं किंकर कहाइ बेंच्यौ बिषयनि हाथ हियो है ।
 मोसे बंचक को कृपालु छल छाँड़ि कै छोह कियो है ॥4॥
 पल-पलके उपकार रावरे जानि बूझि सुनि नीके ।
 भिद्यो न कुलिसहुँ ते कठोर चित कबहुँ प्रेम सिय-पीके ॥5॥
 स्वामीकी सेवक-हितता सब, कछु निज साँई-द्रोहाई ।
 मैं मति-तुला तौलि देखी भइ मेरेहि दिसि गरुआई ॥6॥
 एतेहु पर हित करत नाथ मेरो, करि आये, अरु करिहैं ।
 तुलसी अपनी ओर जानियत प्रभुहि कनौड़ो भरिहैं ॥7॥

(171)

kījai mōkō jamajātanāma'ī.

rāma! tumaṣē suci suhr̥da sāhibahim̐, mair̐ saṭṭha pīṭhi da'ī. 1.
 garabhabāsa dasa māsa pāli pitu-mātu-rūpa hita kīnhōm̐.
 jaṛahim̐ bibēka, susīla khalahim̐, aparādhihim̐ ādara dīnhōm̐. 2.
 kapaṭa karaum̐ antarajāmihum̐ sōm̐, agha byāpakahim̐ durāvaur̐m̐.
 aisēhu kumati kusēvaka para raghupati na kiyo mana bābaum̐. 3.
 udara bharaum̐ kiṅkara kahā'i bēñcyau biṣayani hātha hiyo hai.
 mōsē bañcaka kō kṛpālu chala chāmṛ̥di kai chōha kiyo hai. 4.
 pala-palakē upakāra rāvarē jāni bījhi suni nīkē.
 bhidyō na kulisahum̐ tē kaṭhōra cita kabahum̐ prēma siya-pīkē. 5.
 svāmīkī sēvaka-hitatā saba, kachu nija sā'im̐-drōhā'ī.
 mair̐ mati-tulā tauli dēkhī bha'i mērēhi disi garu'ā'ī. 6.
 ētēhu para hita karata nātha mērō, kari āyē, aru karihaim̐.
 tulasī apanī ōra jāniyata prabhuhi kanaur̥ō bharihaim̐. 7.

Verse no. 171—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! You would be right if you order that I suffer from torments and miseries that are equivalent to hell (kījai mōkō jamajātanāma'ī) because I am so wicked and wretched, and ungrateful as well, as I have turned my back to a Lord (mairṁ saṭha pīṭhi da'ī) who is so benevolent, so merciful, so gracious, so dear, so friendly, so accommodating, so pure-hearted, and such a selfless well-wisher as you are (tumasē suci suhr̥da sāhibahim) (1).

How much care had you taken of me for ten long months I had been in the womb (of my mother) by sustaining and protecting me there (garabhabāsa dasa māsa pāli---hita kīnhōm) as if you were my true father and mother (pitu-mātu-rūpa). [To wit oh Lord, I would have certainly suffocated to death in that stinking cell of the womb had you not taken care of me, if you had not provided me with nourishment and courage to cope with the dark gloomy horrors of the womb.]¹

I was born an inherently dull-headed and dumb-witted person, but you had been kind to give me the gift of wisdom and knowledge (jaṛahim bibēka).

Not only this, you had so graciously taught me noble qualities, excellent virtues, modesty, civility and decency though I was so wicked and like a virtual rogue who was totally unfit for them or learn their fine nuances (susīla khalahim).

In brief, I was a culprit who was convicted of so much wickedness and a sinful person who had no tinge of goodness in me, but still you had been so exceedingly gracious and magnanimous that you had shown so much favour and honour to me (aparādhihim ādara dīnhōm)².

[¹Refer: Verse no. 136, stanza nos. 1-4 of this book Vinai Patrika that describes the horrors of the womb.

²To wit, inspite of all my faults and shortcomings, you had accepted me and shown your grace upon me. I was certainly sinful and dumb because I must have done unrighteous things in my previous life that forced me to land in the stinking hell of my mother's womb. I cried and wailed there, and had promised you that if you free me from this hell I would serve you through my life. But once I came out into this colourful world, I forgot all my promises and assertions. I reverted to my old wicked ways. But you were so kind that you prodded me and nudged me forward onto the right path of having devotion for you and take the shelter of your merciful holy name—to ensure that this innocent child of yours would not land in another hell the next time. Refer: Verse no. 136, stanza nos. 4-5.] (2).

Woe to me that I act smart with such a gracious Lord (as Sri Ram) who is all-knowing, omniscient, all-pervading and omnipresent (byāpakahim; antarajāmihum sōm) by trying to deceive him (kapaṭa karaum) by concealing my extensive evil doings and my hoard of sins from him (agha byāpakahim durāvaurm).

But oh Lord Raghupati, glory to you and thank you so much that you had not shown any annoyance, irritation or indignation towards (raghupati na kiyō mana bābaum) such a mean-minded, wicked, lowly and wretched servant (follower, devotee, refugee, subordinate) of yours like me (aisēhu kumati kusēvaka para) (3).

I feed my stomach pretending to be your servant (or devotee; follower—udara bhaurm kīnkara kahā'i)³, but I have sold my heart (my inner-self) in the hands of

pleasures of the sense objects of this materialistic gross world (bēñcyau biṣayani hātha hiyō hai)⁴.

[³Refer: Verse nos. 41, 76, 109, 141 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.

⁴To wit, if a person is truthfully a devotee of the Lord, he is not expected to be indulgent in the material charms of this gross world of sensual pleasures. He derives such immensity of bliss and joy in having devotion for Lord Ram and is deemed to be spiritually elevated sufficiently enough to treat the world's temptations as being worthless. But if a person calls himself a devotee of the Lord God on the one hand, and on the other hand runs after the pleasures of the world and seeks self-gratification from them then surely he is trying to cheat the Lord and the people of the world by pretending to be the Lord's devotee.]

But inspite of my evilness, my wickedness, my transgressions, my travesty, my misdemeanours, my pretensions, my cunning, my turpitude, deception and trickery (mōsē bañcaka kō), oh merciful and benevolent Lord (krpālu), you had shown such grace and kindness towards me, you have extended your protective shadow on me without any strings attached or expectations from me, and you have done it with sincerity and honesty (chala chāmḍi kai chōha kiyō hai). [To wit, you have not paid me in the same coin that I have used—i.e. you have not pretended to be my patron Lord and given me false hope of protection like the way I have been dodging you by pretending to be your devotee and servant while expecting fulfilment of wishes and seeking my basic needs as well as joy and comfort from this world. Besides this, instead of getting annoyed with me and punishing me for my wickedness, you have shown the highest level of kindness, forgiveness and mercy upon me! Indeed, you are a 'Great Lord'.] (4).

Woe betide me and shame to me that inspite of being fully aware of, inspite of having realised and having heard of (jāni bījhi suni nīkē) the great favours, the kindness, the mercy, the grace and the benediction that my Lord (Sri Ram) has always and consistently shown towards me (pala-palakē upakāra rāvarē), my mind is so pervert, so arrogant, so stubborn and so head-strong as if it was made of Vajra, the hardest thing in existence (bhidyō na kulisahum tē kaṭhōra cita), that it could never be pierced (i.e. affected, influenced, induced, overcome) by the virtues of love and affection for the beloved Lord of Janki (Sri Ram) (kabahum prēma siya-pīkē).

[To wit, despite the fact that I am aware of how nice and gracious you have been to me, I still do not have sufficient devotion for you; my mind and heart still do not have love and affection for you; I am still not faithful and sincere towards you. I still love the world instead of loving you. I devote my energy in running after the world inspite of taking a small step towards Lord Ram inspite of knowing that the Lord would go out of his way to help and bless me by overlooking all my evilness and shortcomings. How foolish and ungrateful I am!!] (5).

When I put all the kindness, the graciousness and the tenderness of feelings that the Lord has for his servants (devotees) (svāmīkī sēvaka-hitatā saba) on one side of a scale and weighed it against a small bit or a fraction of my own treachery, wickedness and misdemeanours (kachu nija sā'im-drōhāṭi) by using the weighing scale of my

intellect, judgement and discrimination (dēkhī mairi mati-tulā tauli), I saw or found that the scale tipped heavily on my side (bha'i mērēhi disi garu'āī)⁵.

[⁵To wit, my evil character, wickedness, turpitude and sins, even when I tried to dismiss them as being very small and inconsequential, proved to be heavier and graver than the huge lot of the Lord's grace and kindness that he shows towards me and other devotees of his. It is like weighing a huge bundle of fluffy cotton against a piece of solid lead or a ball of iron; the scale would be easily tipped by the latter though it is smaller in dimension.] (6).

In spite of this oh Lord (ētēhu para), you have been always doing good to me (kari āyē), are even doing it at present (hita karata nātha mērō), and shall continue to do so in the future as well (aru karihaim).

As for me, this Tulsidas knows well enough (tulasī apanī ōra jāniyata) that you are the only one who will sustain him though he is buried under your obligations (prabhuhi kanaurō bharihaim). [This is because you are such a graceful Lord that you do not exploit the advantage of being a creditor of your devotees, but instead become more kind towards them so that they don't feel embarrassed or shy, thinking that it is your responsibility to make them feel at home and easy, not to let them feel humiliated at all, and to treat them as your ward who are in need of your help and mercy. This temperament of Lord Sri Ram is Tulsidas' only source of succour, hope and refuge.] (7).

Would I'll ever be good?

(The Character of a Saint)

(172)

कबहुँक हौं यहि रहनि रहौंगो ।
 श्रीरघुनाथ—कृपालु—कृपा तैं संत—सुभाव गहौंगो ॥1॥
 जथालाभ संतोष सदा, काहू सों कछु न चहौंगो ।
 पर—हित—निरत निरंतर, मन क्रम बचन नेम निबहौंगो ॥2॥
 परुष बचन अति दुसह श्रवन सुनि तेहि पावक न दहौंगो ।
 बिगत मान, सम सीतल मन, पर—गुन नहिं दोष कहौंगो ॥3॥
 परिहरि देह—जनित चिंता, दुख—सुख समबुद्धि सहौंगो ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु यहि पथ रहि, अबिचल हरि—भगति लहौंगो ॥4॥

(172)

kabahumka haum yahi rahani rahauṅō.

śrīraghunātha-kṛpālu-kṛpā tēm santa-subhāva gahauṅō. 1.

jathālābha santōṣa sadā, kāhū sōm kachu na cahauṅō.

para-hita-nirata nirantara, mana krama bacana nēma nibahauṅō. 2.

paruṣa bacana ati dusaha śravana suni tēhi pāvaka na dahauṅō.

bigata māna, sama sītala mana, para-guna nahim dōṣa kahauṅō. 3.
 parihari dēha-janita cintā, dukha-sukha samabud'dhi sahauṅō.
 tulasidāsa prabhu yahi patha rahi, abicala hari-bhagati lahauṅō. 4.

Verse no. 172—[This verse essentially describes the glorious virtues of true saints and pious people.]

Will I ever live a righteous, noble, exemplary and worthwhile life (kabahumka hauṁ yahi rahani rahauṅō)? Will I ever adopt, by the grace and mercy of Sri Ram (Raghunath) (śrīraghunātha-kṛpālu-kṛpā tēm), the auspicious temperament and excellent characteristics of true and pious saints (santa-subhāva gahauṅō)? (1).

Would I be always contented with whatever I get (jathālābha santōṣa sadā), and would not expect or desire anything from anyone (Gods or humans) ever (kāhū sōm kachu na cahauṅō).

I shall always spend my time (i.e. involve myself) in the welfare of others and doing good to them (para-hita-nirata nirantara).

I shall follow the various 'Yam-Niyam' with my mind, speech and deeds (mana krama bacana nēma nibahauṅō)¹.

[¹The 10 Yam-Niyam are the codes of conduct as prescribed in the scriptures for personal behaviour. These are the laws, regulations, restraints and various controls that a person is expected to practice in his or life. They are the following :- Ahinsa (non-violence, abstinence from killing), Satya (truthfulness), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (celibacy; restraint of the sense organs, specially the genitals, but by extension all the sense organs such as speech, thought, eyes, touch, ears can be also involved in lasciviousness and lust), Aparigraha (non-accumulation or hoarding), Saucha (cleanliness), Santosh (contentedness, satisfaction), Tap (penance, austerities), Swadhaya (self-study of scriptures) and Ishwar-Pranidhan (deep devotion or concentration of mind on the Lord God).

See also verse no. 58, stanza no. 6.] (2).

I shall not burn in the fire of anger and revenge inspite of hearing provocative words which are offending, insulting and intolerably harsh (paruṣa bacana ati dusaha śravana suni tēhi pāvaka na dahauṅō). [To wit, I shall be calm and forgiving in the face of grave provocations. I shall not harbour any ill-will against my tormentors and adversaries. I shall not let their harsh words disturb my inner peace of mind and heart.]

I shall abandon pride, vanity, ego, haughtiness and hypocrisy (bigata māna), and instead remain modest, poised and calm in my mind and heart (sama sītala mana). [To wit, I shall treat all those who praise me as well as those who criticise me with exemplary equanimity and equality. I shall not let my ego come in the way and unnecessarily stoke the fire of anger and ill-will against my adversaries, or be puffed-up by praise so much that I bend over backwards to favour the wicked and the rascals just because they falsely heap honours on me.]

Indeed, I shall practice exemplary equanimity and evenness of mind so much so that I shall neither criticise anyone nor praise them (para-guna nahim dōṣa kahauṅgō)².

[²This statement can be read as follows also—“I shall accept and acknowledge the good virtues in others, and not see their faults and shortcomings.”

To wit, I shall always be concentrating my thoughts and mind on Lord Sri Ram, and therefore I will have no time for such evil, wayward and futile activities as pricking holes in other people’s characters and finding fault with all and sundry.] (3).

I shall keep aside (i.e. remain unperturbed and unmoved by) all the worries regarding my physical body and its comfort (parihari dēha-janita cintā), and treat sorrows and miseries, pleasures and joys alike (dukha-sukha samabud'dhi sahauṅgō). [To wit, I shall not be unduly concerned about trying to gratify the urges of my gross body as I know it is perishable and naturally habituated to complaining and demanding endlessly. I know that the more I try to appease it, the more demanding it would become. On the other hand, if I stop pampering it, by and by it would learn to tolerate hardships, and it would stop being a cause of constant nuisance for my peace of mind.]

Oh Lord! This fellow Tulsidas hopes that he would be able to remain steady and faithful on this most auspicious path as outlined above (tulasidāsa prabhu yahi patha rahi), and as a result would be able to receive as a blessing an eternal devotion for the Lord (Sri Ram) (abicala hari-bhagati lahouṅgō) (4).

There is no other recourse except Lord Rāma’s Holy Name

(173)

नाहिंन आवत आन भरोसो
यहि कलिकाल सकल साधनतरु है श्रम-फलनि फरो सो ॥1॥
तप, तीरथ, उपवास, दान, मख जेहि जो रुचै करौ सो ।
पायेहि पै जानिबो करम-फल भरि भरि बेद परोसो ॥2॥
आगम-बिधि जप-जाग करत नर सरत न काज खरो सो ।
सुख सपनेहु न जोग-सिद्धि-साधन, रोग बियोग धरो सो ॥3॥
काम, क्रोध, मद, लोभ, मोह मिलि ग्यान बिराग हरो सो ।
बिगरत मन संन्यास लेत जल नावत आम घरो सो ॥4॥
बहु मत मुनि बहु पंथ पुराननि जहाँ-तहाँ झगरो सो ।
गुरु कह्यो राम-भजन नीको मोहिं लगत राज-डगरो सो ॥5॥
तुलसि बिनु परतीति प्रीति फिरि-फिरि पचि मरै मरो सो ।
रामनाम-बोहित भव-सागर चाहै तरन तरो सो ॥6॥

(173)

nāhinna āvata āna bharōsō

yahi kalikāla sakala sādhanataru hai śrama-phalani pharō sō. 1.
tapa, tīratha, upavāsa, dāna, makha jēhi jō rucai karau sō.

pāyēhi pai jānibō karama-phala bhari bhari bēda parōsō. 2.
 āgama-bidhi japa-jāga karata nara sarata na kāja kharō sō.
 sukha sapanēhu na jōga-sidhi-sādhana, rōga biyōga dharō sō. 3.
 kāma, krōdha, mada, lōbha, mōha mili gyāna birāga harō sō.
 bigarata mana sann'yāsa lēta jala nāvata āma gharō sō. 4.
 bahu mata muni bahu pantha purānani jahām'tahām'jhagarō sō.
 guru kahyō rāma-bhajana nīkō mōhim lagata rāja-ḍagarō sō. 5.
 tulasi binu paratīti prīti phiri-phiri paci marai marō sō.
 rāmanāma-bōhita bhava-sāgara cāhai tarana tarō sō. 6.

Verse no. 173—I don't have any faith and I can't rely on any other means (for attaining liberation and deliverance for myself, for getting freedom from all the spiritual shackles that have tied me to this world and its endless cycle of misery and grief) (nāhinna āvata āna bharōsō).

In this age known as 'Kaliyug', all the trees representing various means and paths that are called Sadhans (by which a person can attain freedom from his worldly miseries as well as obtain spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation, salvation) (yahi kalikāla sakala sādhanataru hai), appear to bear fruits only after investing a lot of labour, making a lot of efforts and doing many tough and arduous deeds (śrama-phalani pharō sō)¹.

[¹To wit, there are numerous paths shown by the scriptures by following which one can reach his desired spiritual goal, and get peace and happiness in his life. But it is easy said than done, as all the means shown are so difficult and full of hurdles that rarely a person can do them properly, rarely can he meet their stringent standards and demands. So failure is the norm. It then turns out to be sour grapes because in spite of striving hard a person finds it well nigh impossible to reach his target. No matter how diligent a person may be, desired fruits always elude him and all his efforts go down the drain.

Now, in the following stanzas outline the various means by which religious merit can be accumulated, but it will be observed that all of them require effort, money, time, action and doing of deeds with a lot of labour involved on the part of a spiritual aspirant.] (1).

Penances and austerities (tapa), pilgrimage (tīratha), religious vows and fastings (upavāsa), charity (dāna), Yagyas (fire and other religious sacrifices—"makha") etc.—let anyone do whatever suits him (jēhi jō rucai karau sō), but the fruits (or the results) of all the above meritorious means (which involve a lot of effort, sacrifice, money and labour) can be seen or tasted only when they mature and fructify (pāyēhi pai jānibō karama-phala), though the Vedas have offered bountifuls of these rewards (bhari bhari bēda parōsō)².

[²All the meritorious deeds outlined here do yield the desired result as promised by the scriptures but only when they are done properly and fully, something which is almost impossible to implement in this present world. Thus, though all these spiritual paths and auspicious deeds are praised immensely by the Vedas, but their actual implementation and practice is so arduous and cumbersome that a big question mark is raised as to their effectiveness. There are so many untold problems in one's life that act as a source of constant interference and hindrance that success in any of these exercises is a big concern in this present corrupt age called Kaliyug. Hence, the expected 'fruit' or religious merit always eludes the seeker.] (2).

People do penances, practice austerities and chant the holy Mantras (japa-jāga karata nara) according to the sanctioned methods (as prescribed by the Vedas—“āgama-bidhi”), yet the real objective is still elusive for them (sarata na kāja kharō sō).

There is no comfort or happiness in trying to attain success by the rigorous path of Yoga (various meditative processes) (sukha sapanēhu na jōga-sidhi-sādhana), because there is a lack of proper guidance and teachers besides the fear of the practitioner facing various diseases as well as the frustration and agony that accompanies failure (rōga biyōga dharō sō)³.

[³To wit, the harsh realities of Yoga makes the body weakened and diseased, which makes one burdensome on one's family and his own life turns out to be a source of annoyance for him. In the absence of proper guidance, Yoga proves more dangerous than being beneficial for the practitioner.] (3).

The vicious combination of ‘kāma’ (lust, passions, desires), ‘krōdha’ (anger, vengeance, indignance), ‘mada’ (arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride, vanity), ‘lōbha’ (greed, avarice, rapacity), ‘mōha’ (delusions and attachments) have all joined hands (mili) to almost abduct or decimate the virtues of knowledge, wisdom, discrimination and renunciation (gyāna birāga harō sō), while ‘Sanyas’ (mendicant, austere life; renunciation of the household life and living like a recluse and ascetic) makes the mind as unclean, corrupt and polluted as water poured in an earthen pot which has not been hard-baked (because the mud/earth dissolves in the water, making it turbid and polluted) (bigarata mana sann'yāsa lēta jala nāvata āma gharō sō)⁴.

[⁴No matter how hard a person tries to progress on his spiritual mission and attain his goal in life by being auspicious, righteous and meritorious, yet the vices listed herein are so overbearing and strong that they defeat all his efforts.

The worst part is that if he tries to force himself into practicing ‘Sanyas’ or renunciation, the mind begins to lust more and more for all those things that he tries to give up. He feels that he is the worse for having taken to Sanyas though externally he may appear to be practicing it.] (4).

There are six Darshans (school of philosophy) enunciated by various sages (bahu mata muni)⁵, and there appears to be a lot of confusion, doubt and discord everywhere (jahām-tahām jhagarō sō) since the Purans (ancient scriptures) have laid down myriads of paths, ways and means (bahu pantha purānani) which are so different from one another that they cause more discord and dilemma than removing them⁶.

My Guru (teacher) has prescribed devotion and love for Lord Sri Ram and his holy name as being the simplest and the best path suited for me (according to my temperament, bearing and intellectual development—“guru kahyō rāma-bhajana”), and I also like it (nīkō) as it is a straightforward, uncomplicated, easy and even avenue or path for me (mōhim lagata rāja-ḍagarō sō) by which I can reach my destination in the easiest possible way without humps and bumps to obstruct my path.

[⁵The 6 schools of philosophy are:- Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra, Jaimini's Purva Mimansa, Badaryan's Uttar Mimansa, Gautam's Nyaya, Kanad's Vaisheshik, and Kapil's Sankhya Shastra.

⁶Refer also to verse nos. 139, 184, 194 (3), and 195 (2) of this book Vinai Patrika in this context of the degradations, perversities and turpitudes of Kaliyug, the virtual impossibility to adhere to goodness, and the negation and decimation of all good virtues during this era.] (5).

Oh Tulsi! Those who want to crush themselves to death (*marai*) under the burden of all the Sadhans described above instead of having devotion, love and faith in Lord Ram (*binu paratīti prīti*), and thereby remain endlessly trapped in this world of transmigration (*phiri-phiri paci marai*), let them do what they want (*marai marō sō*), but I can assert that Lord Ram's holy name is like a strong ship (*rāmanāma-bōhita*) by which one can easily, surely and comfortably get across this vast ocean symbolised by the world of transmigration with all its attendant horrors. So anyone who wishes to go across this ocean should get on this 'ship' and sail happily across (*bhava-sāgara cāhai tarana tarō sō*)⁷.

[⁷Here, Lord Ram's holy name is likened to a robust ship which takes a passenger across the ocean comfortably and without any worry. The 'ocean' here is the world of transmigration, known as the Bhava Sagar.

In short, Tulsidas avers that there are myriads of paths, and all are effective—but they are so difficult to implement that success is impractical to obtain. The easiest and most convenient path is Lord Sri Ram's holy name and having devotion for the Lord.] (6).

Who is a True Companion

(174)

जाके प्रिय न राम—बैदेही ।
तजिये ताहि/सो छाँड़िये कोटि बैरी सम, जद्यपि परम सनेही ॥1॥
तज्यो पिता प्रहलाद, बिभीषन बंधु, भरत महतारी ।
बलि गुरु तज्यो कंत ब्रज—बनितन्हि, भये मुद—मंगलकारी ॥2॥
नाते नेह रामके मनियत सुहृद सुसेव्य जहाँ लौं ।
अंजन कहा आँखि जेहि फूटै, बहुतक कहाँ कहाँ लौं ॥3॥
तलसी सो सब भाँति परम हित पूज्य प्रानते प्यारो
जासों होय सनेह राम—पद, एतो मतो हमारो ॥4॥

(174)

jākē priya na rāma-baidēhī.
tajiye tāhi/sō chāṁḍīyē kōṭi bairī sama, jadyapi parama sanēhī. 1.
tajyō pitā prahalāda, bibhiṣana bandhu, bharata mahatārī.
bali guru tajyō kanta braja-banitanhi, bhayē muda-maṅgalakārī. 2.
nātē nēha rāmakē maniyata suhr̥da susēbya jahām' laum̃.
aṅjana kahā āmkhi jēhi phūṭai, bahutaka kahaur̃ kahām' laum̃. 3.
talasī sō saba bhām̃ti parama hita pūjya prānatē pyārō

jāsōm hōya sanēha rāma-pada, ētō matō hamārō. 4.

Verse no. 174—[Verse nos. 174 and 175 say that one should establish relationships with only those people who have devotion and faith in the Lord, for such company would be for one's own welfare.]

Those who do not have love, affection and devotion for Lord Sri Ram and Sita (who is also known as Vaidehi; *rāma-baidēhī*) should be abandoned and forsaken, with one having nothing to do with them as if they were like millions of enemies combined (*tajiyē tāhi/sō chāmḍiyē kōṭi bairī sama*), though they might be most dear and near to one's self (*jadyapi parama sanēhī*)¹.

[¹To wit, for one's own spiritual welfare and good it is advisable that one should keep company with those people who have devotion and affection for Lord Ram, and to keep away from those who have no sense of devotion for the Lord.

The former sort of company would help the seeker in his quest for liberation and deliverance from this mundane world with its attendant miseries and torments, and at the same time give him eternal peace and calmness. On the other hand, the latter type of relationship only strengthens the fetters that bind the creature to this gross world, and drags him into the vortex of miseries and problems associated with humdrum existence.

Therefore, a wise person would treat the former company as the one which is very dear to him and like a true friend who is eager to help him in reaching his destination in right earnest, while keeping away from the latter sort of company as if it consists of his arch enemies who are eager to lead him to his ruin.] (1).

[For example—] Prahalad had abandoned his father (the demon Hiranyakashipu—“*tajyō pitā prahalāda*”), Vibhishan his brother (Ravana—“*bibhīṣana bandhu*”), Bharat his mother (Kaikeyi—“*bharata mahatārī*”), king Bali his Guru (sage Sukracharaya—“*bali guru tajyō*”), and the milkmaids (Gopies) of Vrindavan their respective husbands (*kanta braja-banitanhi*)²—because they were proving a hindrance in their spiritual efforts and creating an obstruction in their expression of love, devotion and worship for their respective Lords.

This act of theirs became very auspicious for them, and they acquired great happiness and joy (*bhayē muda-maṅgalakārī*)³.

[²See note at the end of this verse marked #.

³To wit, by preferring the Lord over their kith and kin, all the above-mentioned persons acquired good name, immense fame and great glory instead of inviting any ignominy or criticism for their having abandoned their own kith and kin in favour of someone else, in this case the ‘Lord’. Indeed, all of them became highly pure, revered and venerated in the world; they became auspicious and renowned.] (2).

Forsooth and without any gainsay, all good relations that has ever existed in this world, and all those who are worthy of being praised, revered and honoured—all of them are recognised as such only due to the common relationship of love, devotion and affection that they have with Lord Sri Ram (*nātē nēha rāmakē maniyata suhrda susēbya jahām laum*).

Now, what more can I (Tulsidas) say (*bahutaka kahauṁ kahām̐ laum̐*): what is the use of applying an eye-ointment which results in blindness (*an̐jana kahā ām̐khi jēhi phūṭai*)⁴?

[⁴Each and every person who is honoured, adored and revered in this world, who is considered as being one's true friend and well-wisher with whom one ought to establish good relationships—verily, all of them owe to Lord Ram the credit for their glory, for the honour bestowed upon them and for their exalted stature as being universally favoured and beneficial for all the creatures, ones who are worthy of establishing relationship with.

The 'eye-ointment' here is a metaphor that refers to those people whom a person considers as his close kith and kin or friend and associate—such as one's parents, brothers, friends, a Guru or teacher and moral preceptor, and so on. Just like the ointment is in close touch with the eye, these people are also in close contact with the person concerned and have a direct intercourse with him in his day-to-day life. But if these companions have no faith and devotion for Lord God, if they have no spiritual inclination in them, if they are only interested in the person because he serves their self interest and fulfils their needs vis-à-vis the material things of this gross world, then they are best avoided by a wise person.

Say, what is the use of applying an eye ointment that would make a person blind instead of improving his vision? Is it not wiser to stay away from it?] (3).

Tulsidas says that it is his well thought and considered opinion, after weighing all the pros and cons (*talasī -- ētō matō hamārō*), that a person whose company or teaching results in establishing love, affection and devotion towards the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (*jāsōm̐ hōya sanēha rāma-pada*)—well, he is the one who is our best well-wisher and benefactor by all means, he is the one who is to be revered, honoured and venerated in all possible ways, and such a person is more dear to my heart than my life itself (*sō saba bhām̐ti parama hita pūjya prānatē pyārō*) (4).

[Note—#Prahalad was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, but his demon father did not like it. So Prahalad defied his father and continued to have devotion for the Lord. His father was ultimately killed by Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Lord Narsingh when he tried to kill Prahalad by a sword.

The story of Prahalad is narrated as a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this book *Vinai Patrika*.

Vibhishan was the younger brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka. He abandoned his brother when the latter developed animosity with Lord Ram.

The story of Vibhishan is narrated as a note appended to verse no. 145, stanza no. 2 of this book *Vinai Patrika*.

The story of Bharat in brief is this: Bharat was the younger step-brother of Lord Ram. His mother Kaikeyi, on the instigation of one of her trusted maids called Manthara, the Hunch-Back, had wanted to make her son Bharat as the King of Ayodhya instead of the rightful heir, Lord Ram. Manthara and Kaikeyi conspired, and the latter prevailed upon her husband, King Dasrath who was Lord Ram's father, to send the

Lord to fourteen years of forest exile and anoint her son Bharat on the throne instead. Lord Ram obediently went to the forest, but when Bharat came back to Ayodhya from his maternal uncle's place and came to know about the developments, especially the fact that the entire conspiracy was his mother's wickedness and it was to make him the king, he sternly rebuked her and scolded her in harshest terms, making it clear that he would never at all accept the crown at any cost as it belonged to his dearest brother Lord Ram.

Thereafter, as long as he lived, Bharat did not see Kaikeyi's face even once—i.e. since she had opposed Lord Ram, Bharat decided to abandon her for life inspite of the fact that she was his mother and did everything for him so that he could become a king and enjoy the comforts and glory of the kingdom. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22—to Doha no. 79; (ii) from Doha no. 157—to Doha no. 183.

In Tulsidas' Book 'Geetawali' it is clearly said that "Bharat never talked with his mother Kaikeyi for the rest of his life". Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 37.

The story of King Bali: King Bali was renowned for his charity. When Vishnu, disguised as a dwarf Brahmin, asked him for land measurable by his 3 steps, Bali readily agreed. But his Guru, Sukracharya, who saw through Vishnu's cunning trick, cautioned Bali of what was in fact the treacherous intention of Vishnu, and asked him to retract from his vows. Bali refused on grounds of righteousness and probity. With the welfare of his disciple in his heart, Sukracharya assumed a miniature form and clogged the spout of the Kamandalu (kettle like pot) of water needed to perform the ritual associated with a formal vow. Vishnu got annoyed and poked a straw up the nozzle of the spout to unclog it. It is said that Sukracharya's one eye got blinded by it. Ever since, a one-eyed, crooked and cunning person is given the epithet of 'Sukracharya' because the latter was the Guru of demons. Bali lost his terrestrial kingdom, was made the king of subterranean realm and Vishnu was so pleased with his determination to uphold the virtues of righteousness and probity by not breaking his vows inspite of being warned, that he became his gatekeeper there.

The milkmaids of Vrindavan loved Lord Krishna so dearly that they would not pay heed to their husbands when they tried to dissuade them from showing overt affection for the Lord as it would seem immodest.]

Life is futile without devotion for Lord Śrī Rāma

(175)

जो पै रहनि/लगन रामसों नाही ।
 तौ नर खर कूकर सूकर सम बृथा जियत जग माहीं ।।1।।
 काम, क्रोध, मद, लोभ, नींद, भय, भूख, प्यास सबहीके ।
 मनुज देह सुर-साधु सराहत, सो सनेह सिय-पीके ।।2।।
 सूर, सुजान, सुपूत सुलच्छन गनियत गुन गरुआई ।
 बिनु हरिभजन ईदारुनके फल तजत नहीं करुआई ।।3।।

कीरति, कुल, करतूति, भूति भलि, सील सरूप सलोने ।
तुलसी प्रभु—अनुराग—रहित जस सालन साग अलोने ॥४॥

(175)

jō pai rahani/lagana rāmasōm nāhīm.
tau nara khara kūkara sūkara sama bṛthā jiyata jaga māhīm. 1.
kāma, krōdha, mada, lōbha, nīnda, bhaya, bhūkha, pyāsa sabahikē.
manuja dēha sura-sādhu sarāhata, sō sanēha siya-pīkē. 2.
sūra, sujāna, supūta sulacchana ganiyata guna garu'ā'ī.
binu haribhajana imḍārunakē phala tajata nahīm karu'ā'ī. 3.
kīrati, kula, karatūti, bhūti bhali, sīla sarūpa salōnē.
tulasī prabhu-anurāga-rahita jasa sālana sāga alōnē. 4.

Verse no. 175—[This verse continues the idea expounded in the previous verse no. 174 regarding relationships that one should develop, and those that one should better avoid. Here, emphasise is given on the importance of having devotion, faith and affection for Lord Ram as an overriding criterion for being worthy of honour in this world and being eligible for becoming friends of others.]

Those who do not have or do not develop love, affection, faith and devotion for Lord Sri Ram (jō pai rahani/lagana rāmasōm nāhīm) live a futile, worthless and dishonourable life like that of a dog, an ass and a swine (tau nara khara kūkara sūkara sama bṛthā jiyata jaga māhīm). [To wit, their lives are like animals that spend their lifetimes in feeding their stomach and trying to fulfil the needs of their sense organs without doing anything else to their credit.] (1).

Every single creature who has a gross body is bound to have some of the negative traits that are common to all living beings; they are present in animals as well as in humans no matter how high a person may be (sabahikē).

Some of these negativities are the following—lust, desire and passions (kāma), anger, vengeance and wrathfulness (krōdha), arrogance, haughtiness, ego, vanity and pride (mada), greed, rapacity and cravings (lōbha), a tendency to be alert at finding fault with others while sleeping over their own burden of shortcomings; or to have a natural desire to sleep (nīnda), having groundless fears and imaginary apprehensions (that lead them to be suspicious of everyone around, fear of death and birth, and so on) (bhaya), as well as hunger and thirst (which are natural demands of the gross body that dominate their existence, and all their attention and efforts are diverted to overcome these two natural characteristics of the body) (bhūkha, pyāsa).

But in spite of this, gods and saintly people have always praised the human body (manuja dēha sura-sādhu sarāhata) because it is through this body that a creature can develop and have love and affection for Lord Ram, it is with the help of a human body that the soul can worship and have devotion for Lord Ram who is the dear husband of Sita (sō sanēha siya-pīkē)¹.

[¹To wit, even a human body possesses these negative traits in a natural way just like the of animals who too have them. But inspite of this, i.e. despite such similarity between a human body and that of an animal, the reason for which the human body is so much praised over that of an animal and sought after by the exalted gods, saints and sages is, however, different—it is the glorious virtue of devotion, faith, affection and love for Lord Ram that is made possible via the medium of the human body that makes it so praise worthy and an object of honour and respect by all the creatures in this world.

The only true worth of having a human body for a creature is to have love, faith and devotion for the Lord. Otherwise, the human form is not any better than the body of a dog, an ass or a swine.] (2).

A son, who is most valiant, very clever and obedient to his parents (*sūra, sujāna, supūta*), and possesses good characters and excellent virtues (*sulacchana*), may be praised for his goodness and virtues and regarded as the best and the most honourable member in the society (*ganiyata guna garu'ā'ī*), but if he does not have devotion and affection for the Lord and does not chant his holy name (*binu haribhajana*), then he is like the fruit of 'imḍārūna' creeper (a 'wild-gourd', cucurbita or colocynth/*Citrullus colocynthis*, usually used for decorative purpose and as a herb for medicinal use) which does not abandon its bitter taste inspite of its beautiful and attractive appearance (*imḍārūnakē phala tajata nahīm karu'ā'ī*). [To wit, there is no use of having a son who is demonic by nature and opposed to the Lord God inspite of his having other excellent characters and virtues.] (3).

Having great fame and an excellent reputation with a good name in this world (*kīratī*), being born in a high class family with a good pedigree (*kula*), doing good deeds and acting righteously (*karatūti*), possessing immense good characters and powers and authority as well as being courteous, polite and modest (*bhūti bhali sīla*), or having a handsome, strong and beautiful body (*sarūpa salōnē*)—verily, Tulsidas says that if a person lacks love, affection, devotion and faith in Lord Ram (*tulasī prabhu-anurāga-rahita*) then all these noblest of virtues, excellence of character and merits are useless and bland like cooked vegetables are without the addition of salt (*jaśa sālana sāga alōnē*)².

[²To wit, if salt is not added to a cooked vegetable dish, it would have no appeal for a person and would taste bland no matter how excellent was the raw material that was used to prepare this dish, or how excellently it was cooked, or how expert the cook was. Likewise, if a person does not have the grand quality of love, devotion and faith in Lord Ram, then no matter what other qualities he possesses, he would deserve no honour and praise.] (4).

Lord Rāma's Generosity and Greatness

राख्यो राम सुस्वामी सों नीच नेह न नातो । एते अनादर हूँ तोहि ते न हातो ॥1॥
 जोरे नये नाते नेह फोकट फीके । देहके दाहक, गाहक जीके ॥2॥
 अपने अपने को सब चाहत नीको । मूल दुहूँको दयालु दूलह सी को ॥3॥
 जीवको जीवन प्रानको प्यारो । सुखहूँको सुख रामसो बिसारो ॥4॥
 कियो करैगो तोस खलको भलो । ऐसे सुसाहब सों तू कुचाल क्यों चलो ॥5॥
 तुलसी तेरी भलाई अजहूँ बूझे । राढ़उ राउत होत फिरिकै जूझै ॥6॥

(176)

rākhyō rāma susvāmī sōm nīca nēha na nātō. ētē anādara hūm' tōhi tē na hātō. 1.

jōrē nayē nātē nēha phōkaṭa phīkē. dēhakē dāhaka, gāhaka jīkē . 2.

apanē apanē kō saba cāhata nīkō. mūla duhūmkō dayālu dūlaha sī kō. 3.

jīvakō jīvana prānakō pyārō. sukhahūkō sukha rāmasō bisārō. 4.

kiyō karaigō tōsa khalakō bhalō. aisē susāhaba sōm tū kucāla kyōm calō. 5.

tulasī tērī bhalā'ī ajahūm' būjhē. rārha'u rā'uta hōta phirikai jūjhai. 6.

Verse no. 176—Oh you wretched and lowly fellow (nīca)! You had been so utterly ungrateful and stupid that you had not shown neither respect or affection nor had established any close relationship with Lord Sri Ram (rākhyō rāma susvāmī sōm nēha na nātō). But look, inspite of your unthankfulness to the Lord, inspite of your insulting attitude and insolent behaviour (ētē anādara hūm') towards such a benevolent and gracious Lord, he has not forsaken you (and is always eager to welcome and help you) (tōhi tē na hātō) (1).

In all your births and since time immemorial, you had established different types of relationships and kinships based on pseudo affections with so many people (jōrē nayē nātē nēha) but all of them were useless and served no purpose for you in the long run (phōkaṭa phīkē) because all of them were selfish and liked you only as long as you were of any use to them.

In fact, no one bothered about how you felt. These relationships and kinships only created so much heartburn for you and exploited you as much as they could, so much so that they virtually devoured your peace and happiness (dēhakē dāhaka, gāhaka jīkē).

[To wit, the relatives you thought were your kith and kin who loved you were all driven by self-interests, and this external show of affection vanished and the relationship became sour at the slightest provocation; they were very short-lived.] (2).

Everyone wants welfare and happiness of one's own self as well as for one's kith and kin (apanē apanē kō saba cāhata nīkō).

[To wit, everyone is concerned only about those with whom he has established a relationship, from whom he has some sort of expectation, but the same person remains indifferent to others.]

But Lord Sri Ram, who is the husband of Sita (dūlaha sī kō), is so merciful and kind (dayālu) that he is concerned about the good, welfare and happiness of

both—i.e. of the individual person as well as all who are related to him and even those who aren't related to him (mūla duhūmkō).

[To wit, only Sri Ram takes care of all, whether or not a person is our kin, compatriot and friend, or even those who we may be treating as our enemies—because for the Lord all the creatures of this vast and diverse creation are his offsprings and subjects. The Lord treats everyone alike, without any discrimination. Say then, who is more magnanimous, broad-hearted and munificent than Lord Sri Ram?] (3).

It's so unfortunate that you have forgotten such a gracious Lord Sri Ram (rāmasō bisārō) who is the very life of the animate world (i.e. of all the living beings; “jīvakō jīvana”), who is the dearest to one's heart and soul (i.e. the essence of life; “prānakō pyārō”), and is the provider of the element of happiness to ‘Happiness’ itself (i.e. he is the source of all joys and happiness in this world, for there is no scope of feeling happy and joyous in this miserable world if one distances one's self from the Lord; “sukhahūkō sukha”)¹.

[¹What essentially is hinted here is that Lord Ram represents pure consciousness that is at the heart of all life in this creation. Since every living being loves his ‘life’, he also loves Lord Ram without being aware of this truth, because ‘loving one's life’ is equivalent to ‘loving one's pure conscious soul, one's Atma’, and this ‘soul or Atma’ is an image of the supreme Soul or supreme Atma represented by Lord Ram.] (4).

Why have you been so stubbornly ungrateful, why did you play so many cunning tricks and were deceitful, treacherous, reproachful and scandalous (tū kucāla kyōm calō) towards such a wonderful, benevolent and gracious Lord (aisē susāhaba sōm) who has always been your well-wisher and benefactor in the past, and shall be so in the future as well inspite of being aware of your wickedness, misdemeanours and misdeeds (kiyō karaigō tōsa khalakō bhalō)? (5).

Oh Tulsidas! If you realise and understand now where lies your good and well-being, then you would be lucky for it is still not yet too late to wake up (tulasī tērī bhalāī ajahūm' būjhē). Just like a coward who can become most courageous and brave by repeatedly trying to fight in a battle because by practice he would learn the tricks and be able to overcome fear and hesitation (rāṛha'u rā'uta hōta phirikai jūjhai), you too can overcome all hurdles and attain peace and happiness in your life as well as attain liberation and deliverance².

[²If a cowardly man persists and repeatedly tries his hand at fighting a duel, gradually he would be able to overcome his fears and lack of confidence. By the dint of sheer practice and perseverance, he learns the tricks of battle, and in due course of time he becomes an expert in the art of warfare.

Similarly, if you start having firm faith and devotion in Lord Sri Ram and chant his holy name, you still have the chance to attain that final glory or victory in the shape of salvation and emancipation in this so-called battle of life and death. It is a battle of ‘life and death’ because if you fail in your attempt to attain final liberation and deliverance in this life as a human being, then this opportunity would be lost for

good and you will have to enter the cycle of birth and death once again. The next chance would take a very long time to come.] (6).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Tulasīdāsa compares his own nature with that of Lord Śrī Rāma's

(177)

जो तुम त्यागो राम हौं तौ नहिं त्यागों। परिहरि पाँय काहि अनुरागों॥1॥
 सुखद सुप्रभु तुम सो जगमाहीं। श्रवन-नयन मन-गोचर नाहीं॥2॥
 हौं जड़ जीव, ईस रघुराया। तुम मायापति, हौं बस माया॥3॥
 हौं तो कुजाचक, स्वामि सुदाता। हौं कुपूत, तुम हितु पितु-माता॥4॥
 जो पै कहूँ कोउ बूझत बातो। तौ तुलसी बिनु मोल बिकातो॥5॥

(177)

jō tuma tyāgō rāma hauṁ tau nahiṁ tyāgōṁ. parihari pām̐ya kāhi anurāgōṁ.

1.

sukhada suprabhu tuma sō jagamāhīm. śravana-nayana mana-gōcara nāhīm.

2.

hauṁ jaṛa jīva, īsa raghurāyā. tuma māyāpati, hauṁ basa māyā. 3.

hauṁ tō kujācaka, svāmi sudātā. hauṁ kupūta, tuma hitu pitu-mātā. 4.

jō pai kahum̐ kō'u būjhata bātō. tau tulasī binu mōla bikātō. 5.

Verse no. 177—Oh Lord Sri Ram! Even if you leave me (jō tuma tyāgō rāma hauṁ), I shall not turn away from you or abandon you (tau nahiṁ tyāgōṁ) because, except your holy feet, where else should I have devotion and to whom can I show my affection (parihari pām̐ya kāhi anurāgōṁ)¹?

[¹To wit, oh Lord, I have nowhere to go even if you were to treat me with indifference and get annoyed with me, because I have surrendered myself unconditionally before you after examining all other lords and masters in this world, and I have discovered that all of them are driven by self-interest and care little for my own good and welfare. Hence, it is best for me to lie at your doorway and persist with my prayers to you as I know that sooner rather than later you are bound to mellow and show mercy upon me. I know by experience that you are pretending to be tough with me just to test my sincerity but actually you are extremely soft in your heart. I also know that if I actually turn to go away from you, you will immediately catch hold of my arms and pull me back to you! So, no matter what happens, I will not abandon you and not leave your holy feet in order to seek shelter and refuge, to search for succour and solace anywhere else.] (1).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, a Lord who is more graceful, more benevolent, more merciful and more munificent than you (sukhada suprabhu tuma sō jagamāhīm)

has not been heard of by the ears, seen by the eyes and imagined by the mind in this whole world anywhere upto now (śravaṇa-nayana mana-gōcara nāhīm) (2).

Oh Raghurai (Sri Ram)! I am an ignorant, a stupid and an ordinary dumb-witted creature (haum̃ jara jīva), while you are an Ishwar (“īsa raghurāyā”; the supreme, the most exalted, the almighty, the all-knowing and the all-pervading Lord of the world).

In fact oh Lord, you are the ‘Lord of Maya’ (“tuma māyāpati”; i.e. the Lord who controls and overcomes all sorts of delusions and ignorance), and I am literally shackled by this Maya and have been enslaved by it (“haum̃ basa māyā”; for I am unable to break free from its deluding influences and overcome its subversive effects on my mind and heart)².

[²Tulsidas means that it is no use to blame him for being a victim of worldly delusions and ignorance caused by Maya because it is so powerful that it has all the creatures under its firm grip. What to talk of ordinary creatures, even the mighty Gods are not free from the influence of Maya which is so overbearing that it is well nigh impossible to resist its orders. But there is a way out—and it is that if Lord Ram should want he can immediately free the creature from the bondage of Maya. This is because Lord Ram is the ‘Lord of Maya’ and the latter cannot disobey the Lord’s wishes and commands.

In other words, a devotee of Lord Ram is well placed to be freed from the fetters of Maya because the Lord is duty-bound to take care of his devotee’s all round welfare and well-being—both the temporal as well as the spiritual. Since Maya plays a spoil-sport for the devotee and causes so much problem for him, the Lord would order Maya to shun from disturbing his devotee.

In this context, refer to Tulsidas’ epic book “Ram Charit Manas”, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 44; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 60; (iii) Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 62; (iv) from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72.] (3).

I am a thankless and an ungrateful beggar (haum̃ tō kujācaka) while oh Lord you are a generous and selfless donor (svāmi sudātā); I am an unworthy son (haum̃ kupūta) while you are a well-wishing parent (tuma hitu pitu-mātā). [Therefore, though I am a source of nuisance for you, you still pay special attention for my welfare.] (4).

If anyone anywhere had ever bothered or cared to ask about my welfare, my well-being and my whereabouts, about how I am and whether I am happy or not (jō pai kahum̃ kō'u būjhata bātō), I would have gladly enslaved myself to him without a price for this mere gesture on his part that indicated that he was worried or at least concerned about my well-being (tau tulasī binu mōla bikātō). [But oh Lord, unfortunately there is none such well-wisher for me. I have searched everywhere and found that no one bothers about me except you. So why and how can I ever go away from you? Even a dumbest man knows what is good for him and what is bad, and so it makes no practical sense for me to abandon you at any cost.] (5).

Lord Rāma is the only source for Succour & Solace

(Parable of the Cloud, the Fish, a Spoilt Coin, the Papiha)

(178)

भयेहूँ उदास राम, मेरे आस रावरी ।
 आरत स्वारथी सब कहैं बात बावरी ।।1।।
 जीवनको दानी घन कहा ताहि चाहिये ।
 प्रेम-नेमके निबाहे चातक सराहिये ।।2।।
 मीनतें न लाभ-लेस पानी पुन्य पीनको ।
 जल बिनु थल कहा मीचु बिनु मीनको ।।3।।
 बड़े ही की ओट बलि बाँचि आये छोटे हैं ।
 चलत खरेके संग जहाँ-तहाँ खोटे हैं ।।4।।
 यहि दरबार भलो दाहिनेहु-बामको ।
 मोको सुभदायक भरोसो राम-नामको ।।5।।
 कहत नसानी है है हिये नाथ नीकी है ।
 जानत कृपानिधान तुलसीके जीकी है ।।6।।

(178)

bhayēhūṁ udāsa rāma, mērē āsa rāvarī.
 ārata svārathī saba kahaim bāta bāvarī. 1.
 jīvanakō dānī ghana kahā tāhi cāhiyē.
 prēma-nēmakē nibāhē cātaka sarāhiyē. 2.
 mīnatēm na lābha-lēsa pānī pun'ya pīnakō.
 jala binu thala kahā mīcu binu mīnakō. 3.
 barē hī kī ōṭa bali bāmci āyē chōṭē haiṁ.
 calata kharēkē saṅga jahām-tahām khōṭē haiṁ. 4.
 yahi darabāra bhalō dāhinēhu-bāmakō.
 mōkō subhadāyaka bharōsō rāma-nāmakō. 5.
 kahata nasānī hvai hai hiyē nātha nīkī hai.
 jānata kṛpānidhāna tulasīkē jīkī hai. 6.

Verse no. 178—Oh Lord Sri Ram! You may become indifferent, careless, negligent or apathetic towards me (bhayēhūṁ udāsa rāma), but all my hopes are only from you, and they rest only with you (mērē āsa rāvarī). [Oh Lord, I don't expect anyone to give me solace and succour except you. I rely solely upon you for my welfare and well-being. I have no other Lord but you!]

[Please don't get annoyed or indignant with me when I say—] People who are utterly distressed (ārata) as well as those who have their own interest in mind (svārathī) are all inclined to talk inconsistently as if they were mad (saba kahaim bāta bāvarī) [This is because they are so mentally upset or concerned about their own welfare that they can't think of what to and what not to say, what to ask for on a

priority basis and what to overlook. When they find someone who would listen to them and they hope that this gentleman can provide them some succour and solace from their miseries, they start demanding everything under the sky from him without bothering about principles of modesty and decency of behaviour.]¹

[¹This verse continues the idea of the previous verse no. 177. Tulsidas means to say that on the one hand he calls Sri Ram as being indifferent and indolent toward the welfare of his devotees because apparently the Lord is not heeding to his prayers though in actual fact the Lord is very sensitive, sympathetic, attentive and careful towards the well-being of his devotees, and on the other hand Tulsidas asserts that he has the only hope of succour and solace from Sri Ram though he (Tulsidas) is most cunning, selfish, pretentious and ungrateful. Refer: Verse no. 171 herein above of this book Vinai Patrika.

Hence, is it not talking like a mad man when one talks so selfishly and accuses his benefactor of being indifferent towards him while at the same time saying that he is the greatest benevolent Lord and the best donor of all! Refer verse nos. 175-177 in this context.] (1).

The ‘cloud’, which is so magnanimous and charitable that it selflessly, liberally and without any limit, continues to donate (or give; shower) the life-sustaining element known as water to this whole world to protect life in it without any discrimination, say what would it ever want in return for the favours it has shown to the entire living world by giving it the much needed life sustaining water element even by the way of a formal gesture of thanksgiving for its graciousness and benevolence (*jīvanakō dānī ghana kahā tāhi cāhiyē*)²?

[²To wit, though the cloud gives and gives abundant rain to the creatures for their survival, yet it does not want anyone to say even a ‘thank you’ to it. Conversely, though no one even ever thanks the cloud for its magnanimity of giving so much life-sustaining water element to the world though everyone realises that life would be extinct without water, yet the cloud never desists from showering rain generously on this thirsty world. The cloud never expects any expression of gratitude by anyone for its charitable nature, for its magnanimity and benefaction.]

But the bird Papiha (the sparrow-hawk), which has taken the vow that it will drink no other drop of water except the ones given directly into its mouth by the cloud, gets the good fame and honour as being the only one amongst all the creatures who truly loves the cloud and acknowledges the latter’s benevolence upon the world by repaying the cloud by having faith in it, by having devotion for the cloud and expressing love for it (*prēma-nēmakē nibāhē cātaka sarāhiyē*)³.

[³This is because the Papiha has taken the vow that it would drink no other drop of water except the one given by the cloud into his mouth directly. As a result, the bird continues to gaze at the cloud and pray to it to quench its thirst. The Papiha knows fully well that even if it does not specifically beseech the cloud to give it drops of rain water, the rain-drops would come to it nevertheless without asking in a specific manner because once the rain starts to fall it covers the whole area, and the Papiha would just need to open its beak to drink rain-water as much as it wants, without feeling any sort of obligation towards the cloud.

But then, this is the way the rest of the world behaves. Everyone benefits from rain water, but no one bothers to thank the cloud. The credit and honour of showing

respect to the cloud goes to this bird Papiha as it openly declares its love and admiration for the cloud by making a vow that it would drink drops of water given by its lover, the cloud, which is fulfilled by the latter. The cloud would pour rain on the whole earth irrespective of whether the bird asks for it or not, and the rain comes down on the earth for the good of all living beings and not especially for the bird, but the bird is honoured because it expresses its thanks to the cloud by feeling obliged to it for giving it the life-sustaining rain water unlike any other living being.

Tulsidas means that the cloud would shower its rains notwithstanding the Papiha asking for the rain drops or not, but, unaware of this fact, the bird constantly gazes at the cloud, without shifting its stare, expecting and waiting for the cloud to show mercy on it in the shape of the rain drops. Tulsidas' subtle meaning is absolutely obvious—he asks, Lord Sri Ram to ‘shower’ the rain of mercy and compassion upon him, not knowing that Sri Ram would show his grace upon Tulsidas whether he asks for it or not, just like the Papiha which asks the cloud to shower rain upon the world so that it can get a drop to drink without understanding that the cloud would soon give rain whether or not the Papiha asks it for water.

But as it transpires, the cloud begins to shower rain a short while after the Papiha's prayers, and the ignorant world thinks that the cloud was waiting for someone to ask it for rain or pray to it by praising its greatness before it starts showering rain. The fact is quite the contrary. The cloud would give rain irrespective of whether anyone asks it for this life-sustaining element, but the credit for making the cloud give rain goes to the Papiha!] (2).

The pure, crystal-clear and life-sustaining water has no vested interest in or derives no benefit by keeping the ‘fish’ in it (*mīnatēṁ na lābha-lēsa pānī pun'ya pīnakō*), but for the fish there is no place other than the water where it can survive or protect its life (*jala binu thala kahā mīcu binu mīnakō*)⁴.

[⁴To wit, the water gets no benefit by keeping fish in it. On the contrarary, the presence of the fish only dirties the water. So it may like the fish to go away. But the poor creature has nowhere to go as it cannot survive without the water.

Tulsidas says that though Sri Ram has no need or benefit from him, but he (Tulsidas) has no place to go to except at the holy feet of his Lord. Tulsidas asserts that though he may be a botheration for Lord Ram, but the Lord is duty and morally bound to accept him as there is no other place in this world where Tulsidas can go. He has taken refuge in the holy feet of Lord Ram, and a refugee has no other place to go. The Lord accepts him because it is the nature of the Lord to accept all those who have come to take refuge with him, but Tulsidas gets the honour of being the Lord's devotee despite the fact that he (Tulsidas) has no other place to go even if the Lord wants him to leave him alone!

From another angle, this stanza can be interpreted as follows:--“The Lord has only reluctantly accepted Tulsidas because, one, the latter has no spiritual merit to his credit, in fact he is only a source of annoyance for the Lord, and two, because he stubbornly refuses to go away and keeps on insisting on being accepted by the Lord as his servant. Refer for instance verse nos. 168 and 177. But since the fact remains that the Lord has accepted Tulsidas inspite of the latter's shortcomings, the world has

praised the Lord for being so kind and gracious as to have accepted a worthless fellow like Tulsidas!”] (3).

I have a humble submission to make before you. Look oh Lord—those who are small, weak and humble are able to survive under the patronage and protection of those who are big, strong, powerful and able (*baṛē hī kī ōṭa bali bām̐ci āyē chōṭē hair̐*).

For instance, even coins that have been defaced and rendered useless assume the same value as good coins when they are mixed with the latter and used alongside with them (*calata kharēkē saṅga jahām̐-tahām̐ khōṭē hair̐*)⁵.

[⁵Those coins which have been defaced or have been made outdated can be concealed among a greater number of good coins to make them assume the same value as the good coins. Here in this example, true devotees are like the good coins, while those who are overcome by Maya and have become corrupt are like the bad coins. But since the latter invoke Lord Ram’s holy name and call themselves the Lord’s devotees, their evil nature is hidden behind the glorious façade of being the Lord’s devotee.

Tulsidas says about himself that though he has no spiritual merit to his credit, but since he utters Lord Ram’s holy name and has taken shelter with the Lord, he has become as praiseworthy and honourable as true and much acclaimed saints are. He says—“Oh Lord, I am a corrupted and sinful person who is posing as a saint. But since I have the stamp of your holy name embossed on my tongue, I shall also sail the ocean of mundane and gross world of delusions and transmigration along with those exalted saints who have found liberation and deliverance on the strength of your holy name. Remember Lord: the stamp of approval that entitles me to easy passage through this world is the same as the one that takes true saints across this ocean of misery and grief that is known as the world of transmigration and delusions.”] (4).

In your (Lord Ram’s) court, everyone is treated alike with equal graciousness; everyone gets welfare and is provided with auspiciousness (*yahi darabāra bhalō*) whether they deserve it or not, whether they are opposed and inimical to you, or are favourable inclined and friendly towards you (*dāhinēhu-bāmakō*). [Take for instance the two demon brothers Vibhishan and Ravana. Both got salvation though the former was your friend and had surrendered before you, while the latter was your enemy who had even stolen your wife Sita.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram! I have only one hope and I rely only one one thing, and it is in your holy name which provides auspiciousness and welfare to all (*mōkō subhadāyaka bharōsō rāma-nāmakō*) (5).

Oh Lord! There are certain things that are best kept as a secret and concealed in one’s mind and heart (*hai hiyē nātha nīkī hai*), otherwise everything would be ruined as it would become public (*kahata nasānī hvai*).

Besides, oh the merciful and compassionate Lord (*krpānidhāna*), you know what is in the mind and thoughts of Tulsidas (*jānata tulasikē jīkī hai*), so there is no need for me to elaborate further on anything⁶.

[⁶Tulsidas means that if it comes out in the open that he is like a spoilt coin, a selfish fish, a foolish Papiha and inimical to Sri Ram, but pretends to be a holy person like a saint because he chants the Lord’s name and appears to have devotion for the

Lord, then whatever peace he has got would be snatched from him because the world would ridicule him and rile him as being a deceitful person and an imposter. But it is not so much a problem as is the fact that if this news spread in the world, the people would raise fingers at Lord Ram that inspite of knowing that Tulsidas is a wicked person, the Lord still shows favour to him! Will this not undermine the Lord's glory and honour that he gives shelter to such wicked persons? Hence, it is better to keep secrets under wraps for the good of both—Tulsidas and the Lord himself!

The beauty of this verse, like the rest of the verses of Vinai Patrika, is that this great saint has written these verses as if he is having a free-wheeling conversation with his beloved Lord Ram and chatting with him face to face. He is extremely open in his views and hides nothing of his thoughts from the Lord like a true devotee who is expected to be honest with the Lord.] (6).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Rāma is the only Helper and Well-wisher

Rāga Bilāvala

(179)

कहाँ जाऊँ, कासों कहौं, कौन सुनै दीनकी ।
 त्रिभुवन तुही गति सब अंगहीनकी ।।1।।
 जग जगदीस घर घरनि घनेरे हैं ।
 निराधारके अधार गुनगन तेरे हैं ।।2।।
 गजराज—काज खगराज तजि धायो को ।
 मोसे दोस—कोस पोसे, तोसे माय जायो को ।।3।।
 मोसे कूर कायर कुपूत कौड़ी आधके ।
 किये बहुमोल तैं करैया गीध—श्राधके ।।4।।
 तुलसीकी तेरे ही बनाये, बलि, बनैगी ।
 प्रभुकी बिलंब—अंब दोष—दुख जनैगी ।।5।।

(179)

kahām' jā'um', kāsōm kahauṁ, kauna sunai dīnakī.
 tribhuvana tuhī gati saba aṅgahīnakī. 1.
 jaga jagadīsa ghara gharani ghanērē haiṁ.
 nirādhārakē adhāra gunagana tērē haiṁ. 2.
 gajarāja-kāja khagarāja taji dhāyō kō.
 mōsē dōsa-kōsa pōsē, tōsē māya jāyō kō. 3.
 mōsē kūra kāyara kupūta kaurī ādhakē.
 kiyē bahumōla taim karaiyā gīdha-śrādhakē. 4.

tulasīkī tērē hī banāyē, bali, banaigī.
prabhukī bilamba-amba dōṣa-dukha janaigī. 5.

Verse no. 179—[Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram—] Where can I go (kahām̃ jā'um̃)? Before whom should I plead (kāśōm̃ kahauṃ)? Who would listen to this impoverished and humble person who lacks all means and resources (kauna sunai dīnakī)¹?

For a person who is resourceless and helpless like me, the only destination and the only place where I can find solace and succour in the 'Tribhuvana'², i.e. in the entire world, is you (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) (tribhuvana tuhī gati saba aṅgahīnakī) (1).

[¹Refer also to verse no. 149, stanza no. 1 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.

²The word 'Tribhuvan' refers to the three levels or segments of the world. They are the heaven, the terrestrial and the nether worlds. It also means the past, the present and the future worlds.]

The world has a lot many lords and gods (jagadīsa), and virtually every household has one of its own (jaga jagadīsa ghara gharani ghanērē haim̃)³.

[³To wit, there are countless gods and custodians in this world. The word 'jagadīsa' means a lord or god of the world. In plural Hindu society, there are a plethora of gods and deities, and every household has its own patron god or deity. Tulsidas means that for him the only god or deity or lord is Lord Ram, and no one else.]

But for someone who is completely devoid of resources and is utterly hapless (nirādhārakē), singing the glories and fame of Lord Sri Ram is the only recourse left to him, and it is the only means of by which he can get help and support (adhāra gunagana tērē haim̃)⁴.

[⁴To wit, a person who is without any worldly resources by which he can do any meritorious deed that would help him accumulate some good reward, if he has no spiritual merit worth the name either, if he lacks the wherewithal for getting liberation and deliverance from this gross world of miseries and pains, then for such a person the only avenue open is Lord Ram's holy name and the path of having devotion and love for the Lord. There is no other way. The gods expect that a person does good deeds in his life and makes offerings to them if he wants these gods to be benevolent upon him. For a person who lacks all worldly resources, it is impossible to do deeds such as making charities or doing sacrifices that would please the gods. He may not be intelligent enough to read the scriptures and follow their instructions in full; he may have so many worldly obligations to fulfil that it is well nigh impossible for him to do meditation or renounce the world or remain detached from its affairs.

In this scenario, the only hope lies in surrendering to Lord Ram and inculcating devotion for the Lord. It comes without any strings attached, is easy to practice, and its rewards are stupendous.] (2).

When the urgency arose to do the work of Gajaraj (the king of the elephant race), who was it other than you who had abandoned his mount, the celestial king of birds known as Garud, and rush forward on foot to help him immediately (because you found that

Garud was too slow to take you to the place where Gajaraj was in immediate need for your help) (gajarāja-kāja khagarāja taji dhāyō kō)⁵.

You have sustained and taken care of even me (Tulsidas) who is a treasury of sins, vices, evils and misdeeds (mōsē dōsa-kōsa pōsē)—is there any one other such benefactor and well-wisher, except you, that has ever been given birth by any mother in this world (tōsē māya jāyō kō)⁶?

[⁵Gajaraj was being dragged into the water by a crocodile, and he had prayed to Lord Vishnu to save him from certain death by plucking one lotus flower and holding it aloft the end of its trunk to offer it to the Lord. At that time Lord Vishnu jumped off Garud and dashed forward on foot because he found Garud to be too slow.

The story goes like this: Once while Gajaraj was bathing in a river, a crocodile caught hold of his legs and started dragging him inside the water. Gaja tried all his might to save himself, but failed. When he was just about to drown, he held a lotus in his trunk and offered it to Lord Vishnu, pleading the Lord to save him from certain death. When Lord Vishnu heard his cry, he mounted his vehicle, the Garud, and dashed forward to save the Elephant. But time was running out and the Garud was too slow. So the Lord jumped off Garud's back and revealed himself instantly at the place where the Elephant was. Then the Lord threw his discus and cut-off the head of the crocodile, thus saving the Gaja's life.

This story is narrated in this book Vinai Patrika, in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3.

⁶Here Tulsidas means that there is no one as benevolent, magnanimous, gracious, kind, merciful and forgiving as Lord Ram who provides liberation and deliverance to even the most sinful of creatures. And the wonder of it is that the Lord does it selflessly and without delay as exemplified by the example of the Elephant. The phrase “māya jāyō kō” is a figure of speech to simply mean “is there anyone like Lord Ram” in a particular aspect? (3).

Oh Lord (Sri Ram) who had performed the last rites (cremation) of the vulture Jatau (karaiyā gīdha-śrādhakē)⁷! You have made a valuable and honourable person out of me who is otherwise so cruel (kūra), coward (kāyara), an unworthy son (kupūta), and a person who is worthless like a half-pence (kauṛī ādhakē)! [Tulsidas says that Lord Ram is such a gracious Lord that he has made a useless person like him into someone who is honoured and praised by the world.]

[⁷This story is narrated in this book Vinai Patrika, in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3. In this context of Lord Ram performing the last rites of Jatau who was a vulture by birth, refer also to verse no. 180, stanza no. 6; verse no. 183, stanza no. 2; verse no. 191, stanza no. 5.] (4).

Verily oh Lord, I submit truthfully, in all humility and with full conviction that the misdeeds, the misdemeanours and the maleficence of Tulsidas, and their resultant evil effects that cloud his future and eclipse his chances of getting peace and happiness, can be undone or rectified only by you (tulasikī tērē hī banāyē, bali, banaigī). Oh Lord, it is only you who can redeem me.

If the Lord delays in redeeming me, liberating and providing succour to me (prabhukī bilamba), then this body-like mother of mine (amba) would give birth to sorrows, miseries, torments and tribulations of all sorts (dōṣa-dukha janaigī)⁸.

[⁸To wit, Tulsidas says that if the Lord does not show mercy upon him soon and extricates him from the quagmire of the delusory world and the eddy of its whirlpool-like mundane existence that consists of countless temptations and moral pitfalls, then he would be surrounded by hordes of sins, vices, evils and other types of corruptions, immoralities and turpitudes from which he would find himself impossible to be freed. This would give him endless misery and grief. If this situation prevails and Tulsidas has to suffer in spite of his submitting himself before the Lord and praying to him to redeem him and save him, then obviously it would be uncharacteristic of the Lord's nature and reputation, and it would surely give the Lord a very bad name. So Tulsidas begs to Lord Ram to save him from the countless torments associated with this mundane existence from which he is suffering so that the Lord's grand reputation and honour are maintained. So he says "Be quick Lord; don't procrastinate any further".] (5).

Lord Rāma is the only benefactor and merciful Lord of all

(Tulasīdāsa compares Śrī Rāma with other Lords)

(180)

बारक बिलोकि बलि कीजै मोहिं आपनो ।
 राय दसरथके तू उथपन-थापनो ॥1॥
 साहिब सरनपाल सबल न दूसरो ।
 तेरो नाम लेत ही सुखेत होत ऊसरो ॥2॥
 बचन करम तेरे मेरे मन गड़े हैं ।
 देखे सुने जाने मैं जहान जेते बड़े हैं ॥3॥
 कौन कियो समाधान सनमान सीलाको ।
 भृगुनाथ सो रिषी जितैया कौन लीला को ॥4॥
 मातु-पितु-बंधु-हित, लोक-बेदपाल को ।
 बोलको अचल, नत करत निहाल को ॥5॥
 संग्रही सनेहबस अधम असाधुको ।
 गीध सबरीको कहौ करिहै सराधु को ॥6॥
 निराधारको आधार, दीनको दयालु को ।
 मीत कपि-केवट-रजनिचर-भालु को ॥7॥
 रंक, निरगुनी, नीच जितने निवाजे हैं ।
 महाराज! सुजन-समाज ते बिराजे हैं ॥8॥
 साँची बिरुदावली न बढ़ि कहि गई है ।
 सीलसिंधु! ढील तुलसीकी बेर भई है ॥9॥

(180)

bāraka bilōki bali kījai mōhim āpanō.
 rāya dasarathakē tū uthapana-thāpanō. 1.
 sāhiba saranapāla sabala na dūsarō.
 tērō nāma lēta hī sukhēta hōta ūsarō. 2.
 bacana karama tērē mērē mana gaṛē haiṁ.
 dēkhē sunē jānē maiṁ jahāna jētē baṛē haiṁ. 3.
 kauna kiyo samādhāna sanamāna silākō.
 bhṛgunātha sō riṣi jītaiyā kauna līlā kō. 4.
 mātu-pitu-bandhu-hita, lōka-bēdapāla kō.
 bōlakō acala, nata karata nihāla kō. 5.
 saṅgrahī sanēhabasa adhama asādhukō.
 gīdha sabarīkō kahau karihai sarādhu kō. 6.
 nirādhārakō adhāra, dīnakō dayālu kō.
 mīta kapi-kēvaṭa-rajanicara-bhālu kō. 7.
 raṅka, niragunī, nīca jitanē nivājē haiṁ.
 mahārāja! sujana-samāja tē birājē haiṁ. 8.
 sām̐cī birudāvalī na baḍhi kahi gaī hai.
 silāsindhu! Dhīla tulasīkī bēra bhaī hai. 9.

Verse no. 180—Oh Lord! I humbly plead before you to have the grace and courage (bali kījai) to look upon me as your humble son (bāraka bilōki) and accept me due to this reason, if nothing else (mōhim āpanō).

Oh the Son of Dasrath (“rāya dasarathakē”; i.e. Lord Sri Ram)! You are the one who rehabilitates (tū---thāpanō) those who have been uprooted and left with no solace and succour anywhere (uthapana) (1).

Compared to you there is no other Lord (sāhiba) who is more able, more competent, more powerful and more adept (sabala na dūsarō) at giving protection to and looking after the welfare of those who have surrendered to the Lord and taken refuge and shelter with him (saranapāla).

Your holy name is so miraculous and mightily able that by merely uttering it (or, as soon as one invokes it—“tērō nāma lēta hī”) even a moor (infertile tract of land; barren meadow) becomes a fertile field instantly (sukhēta hōta ūsarō)¹.

[¹To wit, those who do not have even a trace of devotion or affection for the Lord, nor have any meritorious deed to their credit, or have ever practiced any spiritual discipline, are still able to achieve devotion, enlightenment, emancipation and salvation merely on the strength of Sri Ram's holy name by merely uttering it—even if it is done without having true faith and devotion for the Lord.] (2).

Your gracious words (or vows; promises; assurances and declarations that you have made from time to time) and your merciful deeds (your actions to back up what you say) (bacana karama tērē) have firmly etched themselves on my mind and heart (i.e. they have firmly established themselves inside my mind and heart, and I have no doubt about their veracity and trustworthiness) (mērē mana gaṛē haiṁ).

I have also closely examined the deeds and actions and have attentively heard the words of all other Lords in this world, both the temporal as well as the heavenly

(dēkhē sunē jānē maim jahāna jētē barē haim) (in order to compare and judge for myself who is better and reliable)².

[²Oh Lord. I have heard what you have said and the promises you have made, and also what all other Lords, both the masters of the temporal world as well as the gods of heaven, have said. I have also closely watched the actions and deeds of both, you and them, and then compared them in my mind to judge who is a better and trustworthy Lord whom I should choose as ‘my Lord’. After due diligence and close scrutiny I have come to the conclusion that no one is more gracious, selfless, merciful, benevolent, charitable, kind, forgiving and compassionate as you are.

You have promised, inter alia, that you will help others selflessly, that you give refuge and shelter to anyone who comes to you seeking them, that you will accept all those who are in distress no matter who they are and what sins they may have done, and that you always favour all who have become devoted to you and treat them like a mother treats her son. {There are numerous instances of this. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 33 (with regard to the vulture king Jatau); (ii) Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 43 (to sage Narad); (b) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 44; and Doha no. 48 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it (with regard to Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king of Lanka); (c) Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 46 (to the citizens of Ayodhya); (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 85 (with regard to the crow saint Kaagbhusund).}

I discovered that you walked the talk, i.e. you had done what you said. For instance, you had accepted as you friend many the lowly persons, such as the boatman Guha and the demon Vibhishan. You have also liberated equally lowly souls, such as the vulture Jatau and the tribal woman Sabari. You have even provided liberation and deliverance to the demons who had faught with you—for instance, the demon king Ravana, his brother Kumbhakaran, and all other demons. {Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 102, and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 20 (with regard to the boatman Guha/Nishad); (b) Aranya Kand, Doha no. 32 (with regard to the vulture king Jatau); Doha no. 36 (with regard to the tribal woman Sabari); (c) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 47—to Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 49 (with regard to Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana); (d) Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 45 (with regard to the demons); Chaupai line nos. 8-9 that precede Doha no. 71 (with regard to the Kumbhakaran, the brother of the demon king Ravana); Chaupai line nos. 9-11 that precede Doha no. 103 (with regard to the Ravana, the king of demons); and (e) Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 83—to Doha no. 85 (with regard to the the crow saint Kaagbhusund).}

Now, when I examine the nature of other Lords and Masters in this world, whether they are of this temporal world or of the heaven, such as the different gods, I find that all of them are selfish and inconsistent in their attitude and behaviour. They all expect some service and offering from a person who approaches them for some kind of relief. One has to first please them and then hope for some good; and this good comes with a lot of strings attached. As long as the person fulfils the needs of all these Lords and Masters, they would listen to him, and as soon as he ceases to be of any value to them they turn against him, no matter how much he suffers.

A king for instance would honour only those who pay tribute to him, and punish those who are too poor or distressed so as to be unable to do so.

In brief, when I compare the gracious and magnanimous nature of Lord Ram with that of all other Lords and Masters, I am convinced that there is no other Lord as great and dear as Lord Ram.] (2).

How many of these Lords would deem it fit to show respect to Ahilya who was condemned to live like a stone by liberating her from this curse, and who would have taken the trouble to give her eternal peace by freeing her from this scourage (*kauna kiyō samādhāna sanamāna sīlākō*)³.

Who else had so easily and without any effort, as if by some magical charm, vanquished the angry nature and overcome the rage of sage Parashuram who was extremely haughty, arrogant and wrathful (*bhṛgunātha sō riṣī jītaiyā kauna līlākō*)⁴?

[³The story of Ahilya is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 43, stanza no. 3 of this book Vinai Patrika. She had been turned into a stone by the curse of her husband sage Gautam cause by some misunderstanding on the part of the sage. No one, neither the sages nor the gods, dared to oppose or offend Gautam by granting freedom to Ahilya from this curse. But Lord Ram freed her by touching the stone by his holy foot. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.

Sage Parashuram was an image of anger and vengefulness. He derived his name by the virtue of the ‘battle-axe’ (“Parashu”) that he held in his hands. He was so powerful and unforgiving that he had eliminated countless kings in numerous battles, chopping off their heads with his battle-axe. What to talk of feeling any sense of remorse, the sage was proud of this deeds instead. When Lord Ram had broken the old bow of Lord Shiva to marry Sita at Janakpur, sage Parashuram came angrily to punish anyone who had broken Shiva’s bow. His mere presence sent chill down the spine of all the great kings and princes of the earth who had collected at the venue to try their hands at lifting the bow. But it turned out that no matter how much Parashuram fretted and fumed he could not harm Lord Ram in the least, something that even stunned the sage himself. By and by, the sage’s anger dissipated and he calmed down. This story is narrated in This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 268—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 285.

⁴Obviously, it was Lord Ram and no one else. In fact, all the great kings and princes who had collected at the place where Parashuram had come to vent his ire were terrified of him and became cold in blood. No one dared in this world to confront the powerful sage’s wrath. But Lord Ram had calmed him down effortlessly.] (4).

Who has upheld the principles of righteous conduct as advised by the Vedas and tradition (*lōka-bēdapāla kō*) for the sake of honouring the wishes of one’s mother and father, and for the good of his brother (*mātu-pitu-bandhu-hita*)⁵?

Who is more true to his words than is Lord Ram (*bōlakō acala*)? [To wit, the Lord does not dither or falter in doing what he says. He is extremely careful to honour his commitments.]

And who else fully satisfies (i.e. fulfils the desire of) those who bow their heads in front (*nata karata nihāla kō*)⁶? [Of course, such a Lord is no one else but Lord Sri Ram.]

[⁵This refers to the obedience of Sri Ram to the orders of his parents to go to exile so that his brother Bharat could be crowned as the prince of Ayodhya. Refer:

Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 42.

⁶The Lord immediately lifts and embraces even the lowliest of creatures if the latter just as much as bows before him to surrender and express his devotion and affection for the Lord. Lord Ram had embraced the boatman named Guha/Nishad, Hanuman and Sugriv (who had the physical appearances of a monkey) and Vibhishan (who was a demon by birth). Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 242 with respect to the boatman; (b) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 3 with respect to Hanuman; and Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 4, and Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 7 with respect to Sugriv; (c) Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that precede Doha no. 46 with respect to Vibhishan; and (d) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 6 with respect to the citizens of Ayodhya irrespective of their caste and standing in society.] (5).

Who would like to keep the company of and show affection to those who are lowly, wretched and downtrodden like Lord Ram does (*saṅgrahī sanēhabasa adhama asādhukō*)⁷?

[⁷To wit, everyone would like to keep the company of the high and the mighty; no one wishes to invite the lowly and the sinful for fear of ill-fame and bad name as being the one who keeps bad company. But Lord Ram knows that if he neglects such poor creatures, they have no one to go to. So the merciful Lord welcomes and accepts all of them as his own subjects.]

Who will do the last rites of such lowly creatures as Sabari (who was of tribal woman of low birth and an outcast) and Jatayu (who was a vulture by birth) (as if they were the Lord's parents) (*gīdha sabarīkō kahau karihai sarādhukō*)⁸?

[⁸Lord Ram had done the funeral rites of both the vulture named Jatayu and the tribal woman named Sabari. Usually this is done by the son of a dead person. In other words, Lord Ram had elevated them to the exalted stature of being the Lord's parents by performing their last rites himself.

In this context, refer verse no. 152, stanza no. 8 of this book Vinai Patrika.

The fact that Lord Ram was so gracious that he had no second thoughts to perform the last rites of Jatayu who was a vulture by birth is also stressed in verse no. 179, stanza no. 3; verse no. 183, stanza no. 2; verse no. 191, stanza no. 5.

These events are narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, (i) Doha no. 32 with respect to Jatayu; and (ii) Doha no. 36 with respect to Sabari.] (6).

Who else is the support, the sustenance, the solace and succour of all those who have none so anywhere else (*nirādhārakō adhāra*)?

Who is there to show mercy, kindness and compassion on the lowly, the meek, the deprived, the wretched, the humble and the downtrodden (*dīnakō dayālu kō*)?

Say, who would like to be a friend of monkeys, bears, boatman and demons (*mīta kapi-kēvaṭa-rajanicara-bhālu kō*)? (None else but Lord Sri Ram) (7).

Oh my Great King, the Lord of all lords (*mahārāja*)! All those who were paupers, impoverished, stupid fools, ignorants, wicked, lowly, downtrodden and underdogs (*raṅka, niragunī, nīca*) upon whom you had been gracious and kind, on whom you have shown your benevolence and mercy (*jitanē nivājē hairṇ*)—well, they have now found an exalted place among the community of saints (“*sujana-samāja tē birājē*

hairṁ”; though they were all condemned and had no chance of ever getting honour of any kind)!! (8).

All the above narrations are true in every word; not even a single statement has been made or a single thing said that has been exaggerated to praise you (sām̐cī birudāvalī na baḍhi kahi gaī hai).

Oh the Lord who is like an ocean of virtuous characters, who is most courteous and gracious, and who has noble nature (sīlasindhu)—say why is there so much delay and laxity on your part when the turn of Tulsidas has come to seek your blessings (Ḍhīla tulasīkī bēra bhaī hai)⁹?

[⁹Why don't you hurry-up in my case? Why don't you show the same willingness to accept the lowliest of creatures and provide them with liberation and deliverance from their miseries when the time to do so for Tulsidas has arrived?

It ought to be noted that this stance of Tulsidas which on the face appears to show that the Lord is neglecting him is merely the saint's way of showing his humility and eagerness to receive the Lord's grace.

Remember: A true devotee acts before his Lord like a child behaves before its parent. No matter how much the parent does for the child and loves it, the latter always cries for more attention. This is why Tulsidas keeps on pleading with Lord Ram to be more and more kind to him.] (9).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Tulasīdāsa pleads with Lord Rāma for protection

(181)

केहू भाँति कृपासिंधु मेरी ओर हेरिये ।
मोको और ठौर न, सुटेक एक तेरिये ॥1॥
सहस सिलातें अति जड़ मति भई है ।
कासों कहौं, कौनै गति पाहनहिं दर्ई है ॥2॥
पद—राग—जाग चहौं कौसिक ज्यों कियो हौं ।
कलि—मल खल देखि भारी भीति भियो हौं ॥3॥
करम—कपीस बालि—बली—त्रास—त्रस्यो हौं ।
चाहत अनाथ—नाथ! तेरी बाँह बस्यो हौं ॥4॥
महा मोह—रावन बिभीषन ज्यों हयो हौं ।
त्राहि, तुलसीस त्राहि, तिहूँ ताप तयो हौं ॥5॥

(181)

kēhū bhām̐ti kṛpāsindhu mēri ōra hēriyē.
mōkō aura ṭhaura na, suṭēka ēka tēriyē. 1.
sahasa silātēṁ ati jaṛa mati bhaī hai.
kāśōṁ kahauṁ, kaunai gati pāhanahirṁ daī hai. 2.

pada-rāga-jāga cahauṁ kausika jyōm kiyō hauṁ.
 kali-mala khala dēkhi bhārī bhīti bhiyō hauṁ. 3.
 karama-kapīsa bālī-balī-trāsa-trasyō hauṁ.
 cāhata anātha-nātha! tērī bām̐ha basyō hauṁ. 4.
 mahā mōha-rāvana bibhīṣana jyōm hayō hauṁ.
 trāhi, tulasīsa trāhi, tihūṁ tāpa tayō hauṁ. 5.

Verse no. 181—[Tulsidas humbly pleads with Lord Ram—] Oh the Ocean of Mercy and Grace (“krpāsindhu”; Lord Sri Ram)! Find an excuse to glance at me at least once; please be kind to show mercy and kindness towards me even for a moment, as even a fleeting merciful glance of yours would be sufficient for me (kēhū bhām̐ti mērī ōra hēriyē).

I don't have any other destination, nor any other support and means of sustenance except you (mōkō aura ṭhaura na), for in all sooth and without gainsay oh Lord, you are my only truthful help and hope, my only source of solace and succour, and the only one on whom I can blindly rely for my welfare and good (suṭēka ēka tēriyē) (1).

My wisdom and intellect has become grosser and more worthless than thousands of useless rocks put together (sahasa silātēṁ ati jaṛa mati bha'ī hai)¹.

[¹To wit, I have become as stupid, stubborn, unemotional, unresponsive and gross as a worthless and inanimate piece of stone; my mind is dull and dumb-witted to its core, and I am unable to discriminate what is good for me and what is not. I have also become so overcome with the negative effects of Maya or delusions associated with this world that I have lost my powers of choosing the right path which I ought to follow to reach my spiritual destination and hope to attain peace and bliss for my soul.]

Whom should I approach and talk to to find freedom from this dumbness of mine and achieve some reasonable level of wisdom and intelligence that would make me able to discriminate between what is good for me and what is not (kāsōṁ kahauṁ).

Say oh Lord, who has liberated the stones from the bane of their curse and grossness (except you) (kaunai gati pāhanahim da'ī hai)²?

[²This has reference to the liberation of Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, who was turned into a stone by a curse, but whom Lord Ram liberated and provided deliverance by touching that stone with his holy foot which turned Ahilya into her original form. In other words, who would take the trouble of freeing me from the curse of stupidity and the bane of dumbness of mind that has become my undoing if you don't do it?] (2).

Like the way sage Vishwamitra had completed his fire sacrifice unhindered (under you protection) (jāga kausika jyōm kiyō hauṁ), I too want to do a symbolic sacrifice at your holy feet in the form of love, affection and devotion for you (pada-rāga-jāga cahauṁ)³.

But the problem is that like the demons who had been tormenting the sage and creating hindrances in his efforts to complete his fire sacrifice, I feel greatly scared out of my wits (bhārī bhīti bhiyō hauṁ) when I observe the numerous miscreants and scoundrels in the form of sins, vices, evils, corruptions, degradations, turpitude,

perversities and other negative effects that are the hallmarks of Kaliyug (the present age of evil and vices in which we live). (*kali-mala khala dēkhi*)⁴.

[³This story is narrated in “Ram Charit Manas”, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 206—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 210.

⁴Tulsidas means that the way Lord Ram had protected the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra from being defiled by the armies of the demons Marich and Subahu, the demoness Tadaka etc., the Lord should also protect him, Tulsidas, from the torments and tribulations caused by the tyrannical attitude of the negative forces of Kaliyug, which are no less evil than the cruel demons, so that he can continue unhindered on the path of devotion for the Lord, in worshipping the Lord and expressing his love and loyalty for him. The inability to follow this holy spiritual path prevents Tulsidas from attaining peace and happiness in his life. So he needs the Lord’s intervention in his favour.

It ought to be noted here that Tulsidas is speaking on behalf of the entire humanity which is suffering from the negativities of Kaliyug so much so that it has lost its peace of mind and true happiness.] (3).

(Comparing himself with Sugriv, the exiled prince of the monkey race who was freed from the torment of his elder brother Baali who had earlier beaten him, thrown him out of the kingdom and usurped all his rights, Tulsidas says—) I am terribly scared and tormented by (*trāsa-trasyō hauṁ*) the dishonest, treacherous and cunning deeds of mine that are like Baali, the brave king of monkeys (*karama-kapīsa bāli-bālī*)⁵. So, oh Lord of the destitutes and the desolate ones (*anātha-nātha*), I want (*cāhata*) to take shelter under the shadow of your protective arms (*tērī bāmḥa basyō hauṁ*) (like Sugriv had done out of fear of Baali, and plead to you to save me from these evil deeds that the tyrannical Kaliyug is forcing me to do in my life)⁶.

[⁵This story is narrated in “Ram Charit Manas”, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 6—to Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 210; and Doha no. 11 along with its preceding Chaupai line nos. 9-10.

⁶Tulsidas means that the way Lord Ram had protected Sugriv against the torments of his own brother Baali because Sugriv had taken refuge with the Lord, he should also protect Tulsidas from the horrors of Kaliyug because he too has taken refuge with the Lord.] (4).

Like Ravana had thrashed and kicked out Vibhishan, his younger brother, from the kingdom (*rāvana bibhīṣana jyōṁ hayō hauṁ*)⁷, I (Tulsidas) too am being drubbed and smitten by the great delusions, attachments, allurements, ignorance and hallucinations associated with Kaliyug and this gross mundane world (*mahā mōha*)⁸.

Oh the Lord of Tulsi (*tulasīsa*)! I am being burnt (tormented and horrified) by the heat (sufferings) of the three Traitaps (Adhyatmik, Adibhautik and Adidaivik) that are associated with life in this mundane gross world of transmigration and delusions (*tihūṁ tāpa tayō hauṁ*). Oh Lord, save me, save me; I beg of you (*trāhi, trāhi*)⁹!

[⁷This episode is narrated in “Ram Charit Manas”, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Doha no. 41.

⁸Tulsidas compares the torments and miseries caused by the numerous delusions and attachments with the sense objects of the mundane world with the way Vibhishan was being tormented by his elder brother Ravana. Like the way Ravana had kicked Vibhishan out of his kingdom, these worldly tormentors have kicked all peace and happiness out of the life of Tulsidas. The worldly torments are virtually roasting him alive. So he seeks Lord Ram’s protection and shadow.

⁹While Vibhishan lived in Lanka he was surrounded on all sides by the ferocious and cruel demons. He never could live in peace with himself, and was constantly teased, rebuked, scorned at and mentally tortured as long as he lived in Lanka; he found it extremely difficult to practice his spiritual ways and lead a pious life. It was only when he left Lanka and took shelter in the holy feet of Lord Ram that he could finally get his peace of mind and honour restored. Likewise, Tulsidas has to suffer immensely in this world ridden by sinful mentality, evil thoughts and deeds and perversities of all kinds. He concludes that the only way to find peace and freedom from this horror is to take shelter in the feet of Lord Ram. So he prays to the Lord to help him overcome his torments.] (5).

Tulasīdās' confidence in his Lord Rāma

[Tulasīdās' determination to get Lord Rāma 's benevolence and mercy]

(182)

नाथ! गुनगाथ सुनि होत चित चाउ सो ।
 राम रीझिबेको जानौं भगति न भाउ सो ॥1॥
 करम, सुभाउ, काल, ठाकुर न ठाउँ सो ।
 सुधन न, सुतन न, सुमन, सुआउ सो ॥2॥
 जाँचौं जल जाहि कहै अमिय पियाउ सो ।
 कासों कहौं काहू सो न बढ़त हियाउ सो ॥3॥
 बाप! बलि जाउँ, आपु करिये उपाउ सो ।
 तेरेही निहारे परै हारेहू सुदाउ सो ॥4॥
 तेरेही सुझाये सूझै असुझ सुझाउ सो ।
 तेरेही बुझाये बूझै अबुझ बुझाउ सो ॥5॥
 नाम—अवलंबु—अंबु दीन मीन—राउ सो ।
 प्रभुसों बनाइ कहौं जीह जरि जाउ सो ॥6॥
 सब भाँति बिगरी है एक सुबनाउ सो ।
 तुलसी सुसाहिबहिं दियो है जनाउ सो ॥7॥

(182)

nātha! gunagātha suni hōta cita cā'u sō.
 rāma rījhibēkō jānauṁ bhagati na bhā'u sō. 1.
 karama, subhā'u, kāla, ṭhākura na ṭhā'um' sō.
 sudhana na, sutana na, sumana, su'ā'u sō. 2.
 jāṁcāiṁ jala jāhi kahai amiya piyā'u sō.
 kāśōṁ kahauṁ kāhū sōṁ na baṛhata hiyā'u sō. 3.
 bāpa! bali jā'um', āpu kariyē upā'u sō.
 tērēhī nihārē parai hārēhū sudā'u sō. 4.
 tērēhī sujhāyē sūjhai asujha sujhā'u sō.
 tērēhī bujhāyē būjhē abujha bujhā'u sō. 5.
 nāma-avalambu-ambu dīna mīna-rā'u sō.
 prabhusōṁ banā'i kahauṁ jīha jari jā'u sō. 6.

saba bhām̐ti bigarī hai ēka subanā'u sō.
tulasī susāhibahim̐ diyō hai janā'u sō. 7.

Verse no. 182—[Tulsidas has petitioned Lord Ram, and hence he feels reassured of the Lord's unquestioned help to him to overcome his miseries and torments because he has a lot of faith in the Lord's merciful, gracious and benevolent nature.]

Oh Lord (nātha)! I am greatly encouraged when I hear about the long chain and the enormity of your legendary virtues and glories as well as about your gracious and benevolent nature (gunagātha suni hōta cita cā'u sō), but oh Lord Ram I am unaware of the virtues such as devotion and type of emotions and sentiments that are needed to please you (rāma rījhibēkō jānaum̐ bhagati na bhā'u sō). [So I feel depressed and dejected that in the absence of this knowledge or ability to inculcate these virtues, I may not be able to please you. I wonder then if I really would ever be able to please you?] (1).

The reason is that neither are my deeds noble, virtuous, auspicious and righteous (karama), my temperament, nature and habit cannot be categorised as even being good, so what to talk of their being best or excellent (subhā'u), nor is the time or circumstance favourable for me (because I live in the corrupt age of Kaliyug) (kāla).

I do not have a patron lord who would afford help and protection to me (ṭhākura na), and neither do I have any wherewithal to support me (na ṭhā'um̐ sō).

I do not have any assets or resources (in the form of spiritual merit, such as good deeds that would stand me in good stead and bear fruits of success for me in my spiritual endeavours) (sudhana na), nor a body that is compatible to me and under my control (sutana na).

Likewise, my mind is also not good (sumana), and neither is my age supportive of me (as I am getting old and have very little time to spend in search of options for my liberation and deliverance as well as for finding peace and happiness for myself) (su'ā'u sō)¹.

[¹In brief, I don't have a single resource that can lead me to salvation and peace. I am totally helpless and hapless, am feeling utterly dismayed, distressed and distraught, and am virtually afloat like a rudderless ship on the high sea.] (2).

Whosoever I approach for water to quench my thirst, asks me instead to let him have Amrit (elixir of life) (jām̐caim̐ jala jāhi kahai amiya piyā'u sō). [To wit, any wise person I approach for guidance taunts me and seeks help from me instead —because I have found that everyone is suffering like me and everyone needs spiritual help.]

Whom should I narrate my tale of woes; with whom shall I share my feelings of distress and pain (kāśōm̐ kahaum̐ kāhū)? I do not gather enough courage to speak to anyone because no one would encourage me but would rather make me feel all the more distressed and forlorn (sōm̐ na barhata hiyā'u sō) (3).

Oh my Father (“bāpa”; Lord Sri Ram)! I most earnestly beseech you to find some good solution for my predicament (bali jā'um̐, āpu kariyē upā'u sō) because by your mere merciful glance (tērēhī nihārē), a good opportunity for success appears instantly even in the face of apparent or imminent defeat (parai hārēhū sudā'u sō)².

[²To wit, even the greatest of sinners, who have almost lost all hopes of ever crossing this ocean of mundane existence, get instant deliverance and salvation by a

mere pitiful and graceful glance from you, or upon hearing a single name of yours being said when one is in a state of complete hopelessness.] (4).

If you wish then even the invisible becomes visible (*tērēhī sujhāyē sūjhai asujha sujhā'u sō*)³, and if you teach or explain then even that which is beyond comprehension and grasp of the mind-intellect comes within reach (i.e. becomes easily understood and discerned) (*tērēhī bujhāyē būjhē abujha*)⁴.

Now therefore oh Lord, I request you to show and explain the things to me yourself (i.e. tell me what to do) (*bujhā'u sō*).

[³To wit, if the Lord wants, a blind man is also able to see what those with physical eyes aren't able to. For instance, the blind saint named Surdas could see the image of Lord Krishna installed in a temple and the Lord himself talked with him on many an occasions, but there are thousands of so-called wise and realised saints and seers who have never been able to witness the presence of the Lord in their lives.

⁴From a wider perspective it means that if the Lord so wishes, a person becomes so enlightened that he gets the level of wisdom that entitles him to 'see' or visualise the invisible and sublime form of the Supreme Being not only on the canvas of his sub-conscious mind while meditating and contemplating upon the subtle form of the Divinity but also everywhere in the surrounding physical gross world.

If the Lord does not want, a person may spend his entire life pouring over thick volumes of the scriptures and even learn them by heart but he won't understand their hidden spiritual message to benefit from them. On the other hand, if the Lord becomes pleased with someone than he can realise the Truth and attain spiritual blessedness even without having to study these scriptures and even if he is unlettered.] (5).

Oh Lord, your name has been like a parent for me as it has supported and provided succour to a humble being like myself (*nāma-avalambu-ambu*) much like the way water that supports the smallest fish as well as a huge one who live in it and seeks its support for its sustenance and life (*dīna mīna-rā'u sō*).

If I speak a single word as lie to you, anything that is cooked-up or pretentious just to please you (*prabhusōm banā'i kahaurm*), then let my tongue be burnt (let me be punished if I speak any untruth) (*jīha jari jā'u sō*)⁵.

[⁵Refer verse no. 178, stanza 3 of this book *Vinai Patrika*.] (6).

My case has become hopeless and is on the verge of ruin (*saba bhāmṭi bigarī hai*), but there appears only one ray of good hope (*ēka subanā'u sō*)—and that is, I, Tulsidas, have brought to the notice of the Lord my predicaments, my pitiable and hapless condition (and has requested him to intercede on my behalf) (*tulasī susāhibahim diyō hai janā'u sō*).

[Now therefore, the ball is in Sri Ram's court, as it were. And this is Tulsidas' greatest reassurance because the merciful Lord has never let his devotees down.] (7).

Lord Śrī Rāma's Glories

[Tulasīdās' determination to get Śrī Rāma's benevolence and mercy]

Rāga Āsāvārī

(183)

राम! प्रीतिकी रीति आप नीके जनियत है।
 बड़ेकी बड़ाई, छोटेकी छोटाई दूरि करै,
 ऐसी बिरुदावली, बलि, बेद मनियत है॥1॥
 गीधको कियो सराध, भीलनीको खायो फल,
 सोऊ साधु—सभा भलीभाँति मनियत है।
 रावरे आदरे लोक बेद हूँ आदरियत,
 जोग ग्यान हूँ तें गरु गनियत है॥2॥
 प्रभुकी कृपा कृपालु! कठिन कलि हूँ काल,
 महिमा समुझि उर अनियत है।
 तुलसी पराये बस भये रस अनरस,
 दीनबन्धु! द्वारे हठ ठनियत है॥3॥

(183)

rāma! prītikī rīti āpa nīkē janiyata hai.
 barēkī barā'ī, chōṭēkī chōṭā'ī dūri karai,
 aisī birudāvalī, bali, bēda maniyata hai. 1.
 gīdhakō kiyō sarādha, bhīlanīkō khāyō phala,
 sō'ū sādhu-sabhā bhalībhāmṭi bhaniyata hai.
 rāvarē ādarē lōka bēda hūm' ādariyata,
 jōga gyāna hūm' tēm garū ganiyata hai. 2.
 prabhukī kṛpā kṛpālu! kaṭhina kali hūm' kāla,
 mahimā samujhi ura aniyata hai.
 tulasī parāyē basa bhayē rasa anarasa,
 dīnabandhu! dvārē haṭha ṭhaniyata hai. 3.

Verse no. 183—Oh Sri Ram! You are the only one who is well aware of and well versed in the traditions of love and affection that are pure, divine and of spiritual dimension (prītikī rīti āpa nīkē janiyata hai).

I submit humbly before you (or I gather courage to assert) (bali) that the Vedas have accepted your fame and glory as the Lord (aisī birudāvalī, bēda maniyata hai) who removes the arrogance of pride, vanity, haughtiness and seniority from those who have it and boast of it (barēkī barā'ī), and at the same time, and in a similar manner, remove the feeling of wretchedness, humbleness, meekness, helplessness, pity, miserableness and haplessness from those who are underprivileged, lowly, lacking in resources, downtrodden and underdogs (chōṭēkī chōṭā'ī dūri karai) (1).

You had performed the last rites of the vulture Jatau (gīdhakō kiyō sarādha)¹, and had eaten the plums offered to you by the tribal woman named Sabari (bhīlanīkō khāyō phala)².

It is also well known and often cited that all those whom you have given honour and respect (rāvarē ādarē) are also honoured and respected well by the

society of those who are pious and saintly (sō'ū sādhu-sabhā bhalībhāmṭi bhanīyata hai), by the world at large, as well as by the Vedas (lōka bēda hūm' ādāriyata).

Having love and affection for you (and by extension, having devotion as well) are considered far superior to (and even better than) Yoga (meditative techniques) and knowledge (of the scriptures) or wisdom (jōga gyāna hūm'tēm garū ganiyata hai).

[¹Refer also to verse no. 179, stanza no. 4; verse no. 180, stanza no. 6; verse no. 191, stanza no. 6 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.

²Refer verse no. 164, stanza no. 4 herein above in this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.]
(2).

Oh merciful Lord ("krpālu"; Sri Ram)! By your grace and kindness (prabhukī krpā), your devotees are able to understand the greatness and the importance of your holy name, fame, glories and virtuous deeds (mahimā samujhi), and so they firmly establish them in their hearts (ura aniyata hai) even in this corrupt and evil age of Kaliyug (when it is almost impossible to do so; they manage it even against all odds and hindrances created by Kaliyug) (kaṭhina kali hūm' kāla).

Though this Tulsidas is enslaved to others ("tulasī parāyē basa bhayē"; i.e. he is under the influence of, is tied with shackles to, or is pilloried by the pleasures of the senses, the temptations offered by the objects of this mundane world) and has become dry of any emotions of love, devotion and affection towards you (rasa anarasa)—still oh Lord who is the friend of those who are distressed and miserable (dīnabandhu), he is squatting with a firm resolve and determination at your doorstep (dvārē haṭha ṭhanīyata hai)³.

[³To wit, though I have no good quality in me that would normally make me eligible to receive your grace, but I have determined that I will not budge from my stance of not leaving you or stop pleading with you unless you honour my wish-list and hear my petition, in which I seek mercy and grace from you, compassionately and favourably.] (3).

Importance of Lord Rāma's Holy Name & the Moral Corruptions dominant in Kaliyug

(184)

राम—नामके जपे जाइ जियकी जरनि ।
कलिकाल अपर उपाय ते अपाय भये,
जैसे तम नासिबेको चित्रके तरनि ॥1॥
करम—कलाप परिताप पाप—साने सब,
ज्यों सुफूल फूले तरु फोकट फरनि ।
दंभ, लोभ, लालच, उपासना बिनासि नीके,
सुगति साधन भई उदर भरनि ॥2॥
जोग न समाधि निरुपाधि न बिराग—ग्यान,
बचन बिसेष बेष, कहूँ न करनि ।
कपट कुपथ कोटि, कहनि—रहनि खोटि,
सकल सराहैं निज निज आचरनि ॥3॥
मरत महेस उपदेस हैं कहा करत,

सुरसरि—तीर कासी धरम—धरनि ।
 राम—नामको प्रताप हर कहैं, जपैं आप,
 जुग जुग जानैं जग, बेदहूँ बरनि ॥4॥
 मति राम—नाम ही सों, रति राम—नाम ही सों,
 गति राम—नाम ही की बिपति—हरनि ।
 राम—नामसों प्रतीति प्रीति राखे कबहुँक,
 तुलसी ढरैंगे राम आपनी ढरनि ॥5॥

(184)

rāma-nāmakē japē jā'i jiyakī jarani.
 kalikāla apara upāya tē apāya bhayē,
 jaisē tama nāsibēkō citrakē tarani. 1.
 karama-kalāpa paritāpa pāpa-sānē saba,
 jyōm suphūla phūlē taru phōkaṭa pharani.
 dambha, lōbha, lālaca, upāsanā bināsi nīkē,
 sugati sādhana bha'ī udara bharani. 2.
 jōga na samādhi nirupādhi na birāga-gyāna,
 bacana bisēṣa bēṣa, kahūm' na karani.
 kapaṭa kupatha kōṭi, kahani-rahani khōṭi,
 sakala sarāhairm nija nija ācarani. 3.
 marata mahēsa upadēsa hairm kahā karata,
 surasari-tīra kāsī dharama-dharani.
 rāma-nāmakō pratāpa hara kahairm, japairm āpa,
 juga juga jānairm jaga, bēdahūm' barani. 4.
 mati rāma-nāma hī sōm, rati rāma-nāma hī sōm,
 gati rāma-nāma hī kī bipati-harani.
 rāma-nāmasōm pratīti prīti rākhē kabahum'ka,
 tulasī ḍharaiṅgē rāma āpanī ḍharani. 5.

Verse no. 184—The 'heart-burns' ("jiyakī jarani") that represent internal agonies, agitations and torments of the mind and the heart caused by innumerable sorrows, miseries and worries as well as the countless confusions, bewilderments and discords created by living in this mundane gross world are all removed by constantly repeating Sri Ram's holy name (rāma-nāmakē japē jā'i—jiyakī jarani).

During this age known as Kaliyug, all other means, ways and paths (that can help a person free himself from this hear-burn and ensure his salvation and deliverance from worldly bondages) are all as useless and futile (kalikāla apara upāya tē apāya bhayē) as trying to get over from the fearful effects of darkness by expecting light from the painting of an image of the illuminated sun on a wall (jaisē tama nāsibēkō citrakē tarani)¹.

[¹To wit, even as it is impossible and impractical to remove the gloom of darkness in a room by expecting the painting of the sun on a wall to give enough light to do so, it is likewise not feasible to achieve one's spiritual goal in life and obtain peace by taking recourse to the many paths prescribed by the scriptures for this purpose. Some of these paths are Yoga or meditation, Dhyan or contemplation, Yagya

or doing sacrifices, Vrat or keeping religious vows and fasting, Tirtha or going to pilgrimages, Gyan or acquisition of true spiritual knowledge, and so on and so forth.

So what is the sure-hit way? Well, it is to take the boat of Lord Ram's holy name if one wishes to comfortably and surely cross over this vast ocean symbolised by the numerous miseries and torments associated with life in this gross mundane world, and free one's soul from the horrifying sufferings experienced by it if one remains trapped in the cycle of transmigration.] (1).

Though the deeds and activities that a person does in the present age are numerous (*karama-kalāpa*) but they are all tainted, smeared and soiled by the numerous negative factors such as the countless sins and evil tendencies that dominate life in this world (*pāpa-sānē saba*), and as a result these deeds and actions are overwhelmed by sorrows, miseries and torments (*paritāpa*)².

[²To wit, though it is therotically possible to achieve one's spititual aim by doing the right sorts of deeds, engaging in the righteous and noble activities, and taking the correct action that would enable a seeker achieve success in his endeavours, but in practice it becomes impossible to implement this theory because of the so many overbearing problems associated with life in today's world which is dominated by negative factors. It becomes almost impossible to be pious, righteous, auspicious and noble in the face of stiff opposition by the onslaught of sins, vices and evils as well as the overpowering temptations of the sense objects of the world that are the domineering factors in life nowadays.]

Forsooth, it is a fact that doing what is correct, auspicious, righteous and noble nowadays (and expecting good results from such deeds) is like a tree that shows beautiful flowers but lacks any succulent fruit (*jyōm suphūla phūlē taru phōkaṭa pharani*)³.

[³To wit, the deeds that a even a conscientious person does look so nice on their face, but they fail to yield expected spiritual results much like a tree that looks so attractive from a distance because it has so many nice flowers on its branches, but when one examines it closely it has no fruit to offer which can feed his hungry stomach. After all, the real value of a tree lies in its abilities to offer fruits, because flowers are only for decorative purposes but they do not provide nourishment to a hungry person who needs food more urgently than mere useless pampering by fragrances and colours.]

Verily indeed, deceit, fraud, heresy, falsehood, hyprocrisy, greed, avarice, wistful desires, yearnings etc. (*dambha, lōbha, lālaca*) have completely destroyed and nullified whatever devotion, worship and service that one does to attain his spiritual goal (*upāsanā bināsi nīkē*).

What's more, the time-honoured method of acquisition of truthful knowledge known as 'Gyan' (that would eliminate all the spiritual darkness cast by delusions and ignorance) is now being misused to feed one's stomach and as a means of livelihood instead of using it for the good purpose for which it is actually meant, i.e. to learn the secrets of life, to attain peace and happiness, and to achieve liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of the soul (*sugati sādhana bhaī udara bharani*).

[To wit, Karma, Upasana and Gyan are in a horrible, pitiable and most miserable state. See the next stanza.] (2).

[It's a sorry and pitiable state of affairs.] Yoga (meditation, concentration on the Lord) is not possible to practice (because it is too cumbersome and difficult to do), Samadhi (a trance-like state when one loses consciousness of his surroundings; a state of transcendental existence generally achieved by experienced and attained ascetics) is also not without free from so many hindrances (both mental and physical) so much so that it is rare to achieve this state in its pure form, while Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion), Gyan (wisdom and knowledge) are limited to being used for mere boast, show, pomp, pretensions and disguise (jōga na samādhi nirupādhi na birāga-gyāna).

There is only loud talking and boastful claims about these auspicious activities but no commensurate actions to back them up, and external behaviour of piety and holiness that is misleading (bacana bisēṣa bēṣa, kahūṁ na karani).

Countless forms of deceit, conceit, pretensions, heresies, heterodoxy, false doctrines have become rampant (kapaṭa kupatha kōṭi); speech, actions and deeds have all become extremely corrupt and spoiled (kahani-rahani khōṭi).

Everyone claims that his thoughts, beliefs, what he says and does, how he behaves and acts, are the best of all, and the rest are nonsense and wrong (sakala sarāhaiṁ nija ācarani)⁴.

[⁴Refer also to verse nos. 139, 173, 194 (3), and 195 (2) of this book Vinai Patrika in this context of the degradations, perversities and turpitudes of Kaliyug, the virtual impossibility of practicing goodness, and the negation and decimation of all good virtues during this era.] (3)

[Now, in this agonising state of affairs, there is still one hope left. And what is it?]

What does Lord Shiva preach to a dying creature (marata mahēsa upadēsa haiṁ kahā karata) on the banks of river Ganges in the holy land of Kashi (Varanasi) (surasari-tīra kāsī dharama-dharani)? Well, the answer is this: The Lord praises the glory, the importance and the significance of the holy name of Lord Sri Ram as the one divine formula that provides liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul of a creature (rāma-nāmakō pratāpa hara kahaiṁ).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, Lord Shiva not only preaches this divine formula to others but practices it himself by constantly repeating the holy name of Lord Ram (hara kahaiṁ, japaiṁ āpa).

The whole world knows this from time immemorial (juga juga jānaiṁ jaga), and the Vedas (ancient scriptures) too have also been unequivocally endorsing this fact from the beginning (bēdahūṁ barani).

Now, therefore, one should apply one's mind and start concentrating one's thoughts on nothing else but the holy name of Lord Sri Ram (mati rāma-nāma hī sōṁ), have faith, love and devotion for nothing else but the holy name of Lord Sri Ram (rati rāma-nāma hī sōṁ), and take refuge and shelter nowhere else except in the holy name of Lord Sri Ram (gati rāma-nāma hī kī)—because this is the only easy mean, the only sure way and the only path of certainty that can not only remove the many torments, miseries and troubles arising from life in the cycle of birth and death in which the helpless creature finds himself trapped, but also free him from this trap (bipati-harani).

Oh Tulsidas (tulasī)! If you consistently persist in keeping faith and having love and devotion for the Lord (rāma-nāmasōṁ pratīti prīti rākhē), then sooner or

later some day (*kabahumka*) the compassionate, merciful, benevolent and kind Lord Sri Ram would surely show his grace upon you due to his inherent nature, his habit of being kind, compassionate and merciful to all (*ḍharaiṅgē rāma āpanī ḍharani*) (5).

Lord Śrī Rāma can be attained by purity and sincerity

(185)

लाज न लागत दास कहावत ।
 सो आचरन बिसारि सोच तजि, जो हरि तुम कहँ भावत ॥1॥
 सकल संग तजि भजत जाहि मुनि, जप तप जाग बनावत ।
 मो-सम मंद महाखल पाँवर, कौन जतन तेहि पावत ॥2॥
 हरि निरमल, मलग्रसित हृदय, असमंजस मोहि जनावत ।
 जेहि सर काक कंक बक सूकर, क्यों मराल तहँ आवत ॥3॥
 जाकी सरन जाइ कोबिद दारुन त्रयताप बुझावत ।
 तहँ गये मद मोह लोभ अति, सरगहुँ मिटत न सावत ॥4॥
 भव-सरिता कहँ नाउ संत, यह कहि औरनि समुझावत ।
 हौं तिनसों हरि! परम बैर करि, तुम सों भलो मनावत ॥5॥
 नाहिंन और ठौर मो कहँ, ताते हठि नातो लावत ।
 राखु सरन उदार-चूड़ामनि! तुलसिदास गुन गावत ॥6॥

(185)

lāja na lāgata dāsa kahāvata.

sō ācarana bisāri sōca taji, jō hari tuma kaham̐ bhāvata. 1.
sakala saṅga taji bhajata jāhi muni, japa tapa jāga banāvata.
mō-sama manda mahākhala pām̐vara, kauna jatana tēhi pāvata. 2.
hari niramala, malagrasita hr̥daya, asaman̐jasa mōhi janāvata.
jēhi sara kāka kaṅka baka sūkara, kyōm̐ marāla taham̐ āvata. 3.
jākī sarana jā'i kōbida dāruna trayatāpa bujhāvata.
tahūm̐ gayē mada mōha lōbha ati, saragahum̐ miṭata na sāvata. 4.
bhava-sarītā kaham̐ nā'u santa, yaha kahi aurani samujhāvata.
haur̐ tinasōm̐ hari! parama baira kari, tuma sōm̐ bhalō manāvata. 5.
nāhinna aura ṭhaura mō kaham̐, tātē haṭhi nātō lāvata.
rākhu sarana udāra-cūṛāmani! tulasidāsa guna gāvata. 6.

Verse no. 185—Oh Hari! I don't even feel ashamed at calling myself your servant (devotee, follower, subordinate) (*lāja na lāgata dāsa kahāvata*).

[Look at my audacity!] I abandon, without regrets or qualms, all those behaviours, conducts and characters that are liked by you (or which please you) (*sō ācarana bisāri sōca taji, jō hari tuma kaham̐ bhāvata*).

[I shun saint-like characteristics without any second thoughts or regrets, and then have the temerity and courage to pretend to be, or call myself, a saintly person who can rightfully claim to be your devotee and servant.] (1).

The Lord, whom the sages and hermits worship by shunning (abandoning) all types of attachments, allurements and enticements of this mundane world and its sense objects and pleasures (**sakala saṅga taji bhajata jāhi muni**), and for whom they do ‘Japa’ (repeating the holy Mantras of the Lord), ‘Tapa’ (various penances and austerities), and ‘Yagya’ (religious sacrifices and rituals) (**japa tapa jāga banāvata**)—say, how can a foolish, an ignorant, a great rascal and a wretched sinner like me (**mō-sama manda mahākhala pāmvara**) ever attain that exalted and holy Lord (**kauna jatana tēhi pāvata**)? [But still I dare to call myself the Lord’s servant and devotee, one who is very close to the divine Lord.] (2).

Lord Hari (Sri Ram) is most holy, divine and pure (**hari niramala**), while my heart is full of sins, vices and evils, and is very dark, wicked, pervert, perverse and decadent (**malagrasita hrdaya**), so I am in a dilemma and totally confounded (**asamanjasa mōhi janāvata**) (whether I will be accepted by the Lord or not, whether my assertion that I am the Lord’s devotee and follower is correct or not).

I wonder why will a swan (“**marāla**”; symbolised here by Lord Ram) come (**kyōm marāla taham āvata**) to a lake inhabited or frequented by crows, vultures, cranes/storks, and swines (symbolised by my countless sins, vices and evils) (**jēhi sara kāka kaṅka baka sūkara**)? [Sri Ram will not enter my heart which is so polluted and defiled by the various sins, vices, evils that I have.]¹

[¹Surely, he (Ram) would frequent only the heart-like temple (holy abode) of those hermits and sages who have purified and washed clean their hearts of all impurities by selfless deeds, renunciation, devotion, worship, enlightenment, wisdom, discrimination and other means known as ‘Sadhans’ that one practices for self-realisation, self-cleansing, self-purification and self-enlightenment. But I have not practiced anything worthwhile, and on the contrary I am full of wickedness and bad characters. So how can I expect that the Lord would accept me; what are my chances of endearing myself to the Lord and finding eternal peace and happiness for myself; will I get liberation and deliverance from my miseries and freedom from the cycle of endless torments associated with repeated births and deaths in this world?] (3).

****Even at the holy places (i.e. the pilgrim sites) where the seekers of truth, knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment (known as ‘Gyan’) go and try to douse the scorching fires of the three ‘Traitaps’ (horrors of existential life)² which torment them (**jākī sarana jā'i kōbida dārūna trayatāpa bujhāvata**)—I would not be spared from the torments and miseries inflicted by pride, vanity, arrogance, ego, ignorance, greed, avarice and desires of various kinds even by going there (**tahūm gayē mada mōha lōbha ati**). [This is because all the so-called holy places are affected by all these vices.]**

In fact, my going to these places would only increase my miseries because jealousy and envy pursues one even in the heaven (**saragahum miṭata na sāvata**)³.

{**This stanza can be interpreted as follows also:- “Even such paths that have been traditionally extolled by great sages and those who are self-realised and enlightened as the ones which help one to realise one’s true spiritual potentials, to overcome the torments caused by the three Traitaps associated with this world, and to find one’s spiritual goals in life (**jākī sarana jā'i kōbida dārūna trayatāpa bujhāvata**)—I find that these paths are also rendered useless as they have been overcrowded, and made unnegotiable and intractable, by moral turpitude, corruptions

and perversions of all shades because high intensity of arrogance, ego, attachments, greed, lust and passions have become ascendant there as well (tahūṁ gayē mada mōha lōbha ati). These negativities would torment me more than they do at present. Verily, these traits are so sticky and difficult to overcome and cope with that they do not lose their grip even on those who may live in heaven (saragahumṁ miṭata na sāvata)!

So therefore, I am well-off in my present state where I concentrate on having devotion for Lord Ram and repeating the Lord's holy name—as they are safe, without inherent problems, and easy to practice”. To wit, if I follow other paths such as Yoga, Dhyān, Tapa, Yagya, Vairagya or Gyan, there are good chances that I will fall in some dark and deep pit, or face some great road-block which would be impossible for me to overcome.}

[²The three Traitaps are the following: Adhyatmik, Adhibhautik, Adidaivik. They have been described in a note appended to verse no. 17, stanza no. 2 of this book Vinai Patrika.

³To wit, if I go to any of these places, the residents there would be jealous of me and my honest attempt at trying to be righteous and pious, in being modest, truthful and humble. Even if I am honest in my spiritual efforts and true in my beliefs, they would start teasing me and accusing me of hearsay and heresy, of apostasy, and of advocating false doctrines. I would be ridiculed so much so that I would lose confidence in myself and drift away from my spiritual path in order to conform to the lifestyle of the place where I have to live so I can survive. In brief, I would suffer more in these pseudo holy places.

Here, Tulsidas highlights the prevalent culture marked by of sinful deeds and pervert mentality that is dominant in all the so-called holy places in this age. While it is expected that these places would have a high degree of holiness in them, the opposite is found in actual life. So a wise person is one who avoids them with a long barge pole if he wants peace for himself. The plain idea is that it is futile to seek spiritual happiness and spiritual energy in these pilgrim places any longer in this world as they have become riddled with the worst sort of corruptions that characterise Kaliyug.] (4).

I preach others that the saints are like a boat which helps a person to cross the river representing this mundane world (bhava-saritā kahamṁ nā'u santa, yaha kahi aurani samujhāvata), but oh Hari (Lord Ram), I do just the opposite myself (hauṁ tinasōṁ hari)—I create great enmity with them and am jealous of them (parama baira kari), and then I expect auspiciousness and my welfare from you (tuma sōṁ bhalō manāvata)! [How ridiculous and inconsistent is my behaviour.] (5).

(But oh gracious and kind Lord, inspite of all these misdemeanours, all my maleficence and malignancy, my inconsistencies and mischief—) Where can I go, for I have no destination and succour anywhere else (except you) (nāhinna aura ṭhaura mō kahamṁ). That is why, though I am a total nuisance and a mischief monger, I try to forcefully impose myself upon you (or try to establish some relationship so that I can exploit it to force or induce you to take care of me) (tātē haṭhi nātō lāvata).

Oh Lord (Ram) who is the best and the most exalted among the all the generous donors (of boons and grants) (udāra-cūṛāman), this Tulsidas is singing your praises and glories (tulasidāsa guna gāvata)—so please accept him and give him shelter in your holy feet (rākhu sarana) (by overlooking or ignoring all his

shortcomming and faults, if it is only to uphold your own reputation as being an exceptionally merciful, gracious, kind and benevolent Lord by nature!) (6).

Importance of Lord Śrī Rāma's Merciful and Gracious nature

(186)

कौन जतन बिनती करिये।
 निज आचरन बिचारि हारि हिय मानि जानि डरिये॥१॥
 जेहि साधन हरि! द्रवहु जानि जन सो हठि परिहरिये।
 जाते बिपति—जाल निसिदिन दुख, तेहि पथ अनुसरिये॥२॥
 जानत हूँ मन बचन करम पर—हित कीन्हें तरिये।
 सो बिपरीत देखि पर—सुख, बिनु कारन ही जरिये॥३॥
 श्रुति पुरान सबको मत यह सतसंग सुदृढ़ धरिये।
 निज अभिमान मोह इरिषा बस तिनहिं न आदरिये॥४॥
 संतत सोइ प्रिय मोहिं सदा जातें भवनिधि परिये।
 कहौ अब नाथ, कोन बलतें संसार—सोग हरिये॥५॥
 जब कब निज करुना—सुभावतें, द्रबहु तौ निस्तरिये।
 तुलसिदास बिस्वास आन नहिं, कत पचि—पचि मरिये॥६॥

(186)

kauna jatana binatī kariyē.
 nija ācarana bicāri hāri hiya māni jāni ḍariyē. 1.
 jēhi sādhana hari! dravahu jāni jana sō haṭhi parihariyē.
 jātē bipati-jāla nisidina dukha, tēhi patha anusariyē. 2.
 jānata hūm̐ mana bacana karama para-hita kīnhēm̐ tariyē.
 sō biparīta dēkhi para-sukha, binu kārana hī jariyē. 3.
 śruti purāna sabakō mata yaha satasaṅga sudṛṛha dhariyē.
 nija abhimāna mōha iriṣā basa tinahim̐ na ādariyē. 4.
 santata sō'i priya mōhim̐ sadā jātēm̐ bhavanidhi pariye.
 kahau aba nātha, kōna balatēm̐ sansāra-sōga hariyē. 5.
 jaba kaba nija karunā-subhāvatēm̐, drabahu tau nistariyē.
 tulasidāsa bisvāsa āna nahim̐, kata paci-paci mariyē. 6.

Verse no. 186—[This verse continues with the idea expressed in the previous verse no. 185, and is further elaborated in the next verse no. 187 that follows this verse.]

How and in what way can I pray to you (kauna jatana binatī kariyē)? When I consider and ponder over my misdeeds and lowly behaviour, when I realise my wickedness and misdemeanours (nija ācarana bicāri), I feel defeated, I lose hope and courage in my heart (hāri hiya) even as I feel scared to face you and plead before you (māni jāni ḍariyē)¹.

[¹To wit, when I understand how sinful my deeds are and how I have been committing them with impunity and without regrets, I feel very affright to stand before you with my petition seeking grace and succour from you because I am totally unfit for this blessing or boon. Oh Lord, I can't gather enough courage to say anything as a prayer to you or petition you regarding my pitiful condition for fear of annoying you and being turned away.] (1).

Oh Hari (Lord Sri Ram)! I am stubbornly forsaking and persistently neglecting (*sō haṭhi parihariyē*) all those auspicious means and righteous spiritual paths by which you regard a creature as one of your servants (i.e. as your devotee and follower) and show mercy and kindness on him (*jēhi sādhana hari! dravahu jāni jana*).

The irony of the situation is that inspite of me being aware of my faulty ways and the wrong path I am following, I still do not mend my self and continue to walk on the same evil path (*tēhi patha anusariyē*) which results in my falling in a trap of constant miseries and torments that agitate me day and night (*jātē bipati-jāla nisidina dukha*) (2).

I know it fully well (*jānata hūm*) that by doing good to others in a selfless manner (*para-hita*) by employing the faculties of my mind as well as with my speech and my deeds (*mana bacana karama*) I can cross the ocean symbolised by this mundane, gross and deluding world (*kīnhēm tariyē*), but still I act in the opposite manner (*sō biparīta*) because I burn with jealousy and envy even without a cause (*binu kārana hī jariyē*) upon seeing the happiness and comfort of others (instead of aiding it and feeling glad that others are happy and comfortable) (*dēkhi para-sukha*) (3).

All the Vedas and Purans (i.e. all the ancient scriptures) assert and opine (*śruti purāna sabakō mata yaha*) that one should take the recourse of having communion with saints and attend gatherings where the holy scriptures and glories of the Lord are regularly sung and discussed with due faith, devotion, diligence and regularity (*satasaṅga sudrṛha dhariyē*), but I never give respect or pay attention to it due to my pride, my arrogance, my vanity, my haughtiness, my ignorance, my envy and jealousy for such saints (*nija abhimāna mōha iriṣā basa*).

It's such an irony that instead of showing respect and honour to such saints and benefiting from their company, I keep enmity, discord and malice with them (and avoid them out of my arrogance and false pride) (*tinahirṇ na ādariyē*) (4).

(The actual fact appears to be that—) I have always liked (*santata sō'i priya mōhirṇ sadā*) only those things which would keep me trapped in the world-like ocean (*jātēm bhavanidhi pariyē*). [It is because I am a slave of my sense organs and their natural habit of seeking self-gratification from the world of material sense objects, forcing me to run after the comforts and pleasures of the gross world.]

In this predicament and sticky situation in which I find myself, you tell me yourself Lord, how, and on whose strength (*kahau aba nātha, kōna balatēm*), can I remove the miseries and sorrows from which I am suffering in this world (*sansāra-sōga hariyē*)? [To wit, if the kind Lord doesn't help me when I am trapped in this

dire strait, then there is no hope for me at all whereby I can expect any relief and freedom from my miseries and enslavement to this world.] (5).

My only chance of ever getting relief and finding succour is when you become mellowed enough and take pity on me (drabahu tau nistariyē), moved by your gracious, merciful, kind and benevolent nature (jaba kaba nija karunā-subhāvatēm). [Otherwise, there is no hope left for me.]

Since Tulsidas has no faith on anyone or anything else (except surrendering before Lord Ram and seeking his refuge, his shelter, his blessings and his mercy) (tulasidāsa bisvāsa āna nahim), why should he then ruin himself and tire trying to pursue others when he knows it will be an exercise in futility (kata paci-paci mariyē)².

[²To wit, Tulsidas says that when he knows that the easiest way to free oneself from the trap of miseries associated with this deluding, mundane and gross world is taking shelter with Lord Ram, and that the easiest method for attaining spiritual objectives in life is to take the recourse of Sri Ram's holy name as it would ensure one's liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation at the same time, what use is there and what sense would it make in pursuing other paths which are all cumbersome and full of difficulties.] (6).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Tulasidāsa pleads with Lord Rāma to save him
Because it is 'never too late'

(187)

ताहि तें आयो सरन सबेरें ।
ग्यान बिराग भगति साधन कछु सपनेहुँ नाथ! न मेरें ।।1।।
लोभ—मोह—मद—काम—क्रोध रिपु फिरत रैन—दिन घेरें ।
तिनहिं मिले मन भयो कुपथ—रत, फिरै तिहारेहि फेरें ।।2।।
दोष—निलय यह बिषय सोक—प्रद कहत संत श्रुति टेरें ।
जानत हूँ अनुराग तहाँ अति सो, हरि तुम्हरेहि प्रेरें? ।।3।।
बिष पियूष सम करहु अगिनि हिम, तारि सकहु बिनु बेरें ।
तुम सम ईस कृपालु परम हित पुनि न पाइहौं हेरें ।।4।।
यह जिय जानि रहौं सब तजि रघुबीर भरोसे तेरें ।
तुलसिदास यह बिपति बागुरौ तुम्हहिं सों बनै निबेरें ।।5।।

(187)

tāhi tēm āyō sarana sabērēm.

gyāna birāga bhagati sādhanā kachu sapanēhum' nātha! na mērēm. 1.
lōbha-mōha-mada-kāma-krōdha ripu phirata raini-dina ghērēm.

tinahiṁ milē mana bhayō kupatha-rata, phirai tihārēhi phērēm. 2.
 dōṣa-nilaya yaha biṣaya sōka-prada kahata santa śruti tērēm.
 jānata hūṁ anurāga tahāṁ ati sō, hari tumharēhi prērēm?. 3.
 biṣa piyūṣa sama karahu agini hima, tāri sakahu binu bērēm.
 tuma sama īsa krpālu parama hita puni na pā'ihauṁ hērēm. 4.
 yaha jiya jāni rahauṁ saba taji raghubīra bharōsē tērēm.
 tulasidāsa yaha bipati bāgurau tumhahiṁ sōṁ banai nibērēm. 5.

Verse no. 187—Oh Lord (nātha)! I have come to take refuge and shelter at your holy feet early (tāhi tēm āyō sarana sabērēm) (because that is my only hope, my only reliance for my welfare).

I don't have even in my dreams (sapanēhumṁ na mērēm) any good virtues such as wisdom, enlightenment, renunciation, devotion, worship and any other mean (gyāna birāga bhagati sādhana kachu) (relying upon which I can ever hope to cross this ocean-like deluding, mundane and gross existence) (1).

Formidable enemies in the form of greed, ignorance, pride, vanity, ego, haughtiness, lust, desires, passions and anger (lōbha-mōha-mada-kāma-krōdha ripu) surround me day and night; they do not leave me alone even for a moment (phirata raini-dina ghērēm).

My mind has also become indulgent and a follower of the evil and the unrighteous path because of their constant company and influence (tinahiṁ milē mana bhayō kupatha-rata).

Oh Lord, now the only way to make it turn away from its wayward nature and mend its sinful ways is if you would kindly want it to do so (phirai tihārēhi phērēm)¹.

[¹To wit, oh Lord, my mind is not in my control. You are so renowned for your kindness and mercy on those who are distressed and in a miserable state, and who pray to you to help them. So I am praying to you in this regard—please rein-in my mind and make it good. Oh Lord, since it is the mind that controls a creature's deeds and how he thinks and behaves, what he likes and dislikes, so once my mind is put on the correct path of auspiciousness and righteousness, once it turns to you and finds charm in having devotion and faith in you instead of getting hooked to the world and its false charms, my fate would be taken care of, and I shall be eternally grateful to you.] (2).

Saints and the Vedas have repeatedly proclaimed in an unequivocal way (kahata santa śruti tērēm) that the objects of this material world are like abodes of sins and evils (dōṣa-nilaya yaha biṣaya). They stoke passions, lust, greed, attachment, envy, ill-will, jealousy, unrighteousness, unscrupulousness, unholiness and immorality. The result is that they are all create a lot of sorrows, troubles, agonies and miseries (sōka-prada).

In spite of my knowing it (jānata hūṁ), I am unable to control my mind which is greatly enamoured with them, it lusts for them, is passionate about them (anurāga tahāṁ ati sō).

Oh Hari (Ram), I wonder if my mind has been inspired by you; if this situation exists because you so wish it to be so. Tell me Lord, is it true or not so? (hari tumharēhi prērēm?)².

[²How is it possible that my mind is so enchanted by these evil things despite the fact that I have been repeatedly cautioning it against them if it was not your wish, because it is said that nothing can happen without your wish? Therefore, it is only 'you' who can put my mind on the correct track, and that is why I am praying to you in this regard.] (3).

(Whatever be the cause—) However, you can transform (*karahu*) a poison into the elixir of life (*biṣa piyūṣa sama*), ice into fire and vice versa (*agini hima*), and can help one to cross the formidable ocean-like world without ships (*tāri sakahu binu bērēm*).

Verily indeed and without the least gainsay, one cannot find a Lord who is a greater well-wisher, who is more beneficent, benevolent, favourable, kind, gracious and magnanimous (*tuma sama īsa kṛpālu parama hita*) anywhere in this world other than you (Sri Ram) even after making a thorough search in the whole world (*puni na pā'ihauṁ hērēm*)³.

[³This being the case, say who would be more stupid than me if I cannot get my job done even on getting the rare opportunity of having the patronage of such a wonderful and merciful Lord as Sri Ram? Say, why should I waste my energy and go from door to door pleading and begging for mercy from so many other Lords and Gods when I know that my Lord Ram is alone able to take care of all my welfare and well-being, and that even without heaping obligations upon me and expecting anything from me in return for this favour?] (4).

So therefore oh Lord Raghubīra (Ram), keeping all this in my mind and being fully convinced in my heart ("yaha jiya jāni"; i.e. inspired, encouraged and impelled by these excellent and noble qualities of yours), I have abandoned everything else (all other means and hopes) and have landed at your doorstep with full faith and conviction (*rahaṁ saba taji bharōsē tērēm*) that the web (or snare) of troubles, tribulations, sorrows and misfortunes trapping this humble fellow Tulsidas can be dismantled (or cut-off) only by you (if you as much as only wish for it) (*tulasidāsa yaha bipati bāgurai tumhahim sōm banai nibērēm*). [I don't wish to go anywhere else, and I won't go now!] (5).

The illusionary, hallucinating, deluding nature of the world

(188)

मैं तोहिं अब जान्यो संसार ।
 बाँधि न सकहिं मोहि हरिके बल, प्रगट कपट—आगार ॥1॥
 देखत ही कमनीय, कछू नाहिंन पुनि किये बिचार ।
 ज्यों कदलीतरु—मध्य निहारत, कबहुँ न निकसत सार ॥2॥
 तेरे लिये जनम अनेक मैं फिरत न पायों पार ।
 महामोह—मृगजल—सरिता महँ बोख्यो हौं बारहिं बार ॥3॥
 सुनु खल! छल—बल कोटि किये बस होहिं न भगत उदार ।
 सहित सहाय तहाँ बसि अब, जेहि हृदय न नंदकुमार ॥4॥
 तासों करहु चातुरी जो नहिं जानै मरम तुम्हार ।

सो परि डरै मरै रजु—अहि तें, बूझै नहिं ब्यवहार।।5।।
 निज हित सुनु सठ! हठ न करहि, जो चहहि कुसल परिवार।
 तुलसिदास प्रभुके दासनि तजि भजहि जहाँ मद मार।।6।।

(188)

mair̥m tōhir̥m aba jān'yō sansāra.

bām̐dhi na sakahir̥m mōhi harikē bala, pragaṭa kapaṭa-āgāra. 1.

dēkhata hī kamanīya, kachū nāhinna puni kiyē bicāra.

jyōm kadalītaru-madhyā nihārata, kabahum̐ na nikasata sāra. 2.

tērē liyē janama anēka mair̥m phirata na pāyōm pāra.

mahāmōha-mṛgajala-sarītā maham̐ bōraīō haur̥m bārahim̐ bāra. 3.

sunu khala! chala-bala kōṭi kiyē basa hōhir̥m na bhagata udāra.

sahita sahāya tahām̐ basi aba, jēhi hr̥daya na nandakumāra. 4.

tāsōm karahu cātūrī jō nahim̐ jānai marama tumhāra.

sō pari ḍarai marai raju-ahi tēm̐, būjhai nahim̐ byavahāra. 5.

nija hita sunu saṭha! haṭha na karahi, jō cahahi kusala parivāra.

tulasidāsa prabhukē dāsani taji bhajahi jahām̐ mada māra. 6.

Verse no. 188—[In this verse, Tulsidas has personified the ‘world’, and addresses the various negativities and faults that characterise its overall personality and character. In this context, see verse no. 190 herein below also.]

Oh (you delusory) World! Now I have realised your true (evil) nature and (cunning) form (mair̥m tōhir̥m aba jān'yō sansāra)!

You are an obvious abode and a stronghold of deceit, pretentions, falsehood, treachery, cunning, trickery and cheating (pragaṭa kapaṭa-āgāra), but remember that now I have the support and strength of Lord Sri Ram with me (mōhi harikē bala), and so you will not be able to shackle me (or trap and pillory me) in your web or net of deceit, fraud and falsehood, even by the greatest of trickery and conceit you may employ to fool me (bām̐dhi na sakahir̥m)¹.

[¹To wit, oh ‘World’, as soon as I took the shelter of the Lord as narrated by me in the previous verses, say for example verse nos. 185-187 herein above, the illusions and hallucinations that you create by the virtue of your Maya or delusion creating powers that are inherent in you, would no longer be able to disturb me and trap me. Do you know why? It is because now I have the protection of a powerful Lord known as “Ram” to protect me against all your mechanisms and conceit. Therefore, I cannot any longer be trapped by the mirage that you create to trap ordinary creatures.] (1).

You are beautiful, attractive and enchanting only on the surface (i.e. superficially—“dēkhata hī kamanīya”), but on deeper thought and search, with true insight and understanding one comes to realise that you have no reality, no existence (i.e. you are like a mirage—“kachū nāhinna puni kiyē bicāra”).

Like the plantain (banana) tree which has no pith but only layers of epidermis which can be peeled-off in layer after layer in futile search of the pith (jyōm

kadalītaru-madhyā nihārata, kabahum̐ na nikasata sāra). (The world is of similar nature) (2).

Oh, I have been wandering in search of your reality for many births, entered many wombs (i.e. became various types of creatures by taking repeated births—“*tērē liyē janama anēka mair̐ phirata*”), but unfortunately I still could not measure or fathom you (*na pāyōm pāra*)².

[²To wit, I could not know or understand about your true nature inspite of having to deal with you over countless times when I repeatedly took birth and lived in your midst. I was everytime enchanted by your false charms, and I was subjected to countless miseries every time of my interaction with you. But I was so deluded by your overwhelming nature that I failed to grasp the gravity of the situation and remained ignorant of the reality behind your exterior façade of magnificence and wonderful charms.]

Indeed, you had been repeatedly drowning me (*bōraiō hauṁ bārahim̐ bāra*) in the mirage-like river of attachment, ignorance, delusions, desires, greed etc. (*mahāmōha-mṛgajala-saritā maham̐*) (3).

Oh you wicked rascal, listen to me now (*sunu khala*)! No matter what tactful manoeuvrings you undertake, no matter how many skills you employ for deceit, cunning, trickery, pretensions and temptations to suit your purpose (*chala-bala kōṭi kiyē*), but a devotee of the Lord will never be tamed by you (and you will fail miserably in your efforts to delude and trap the devotees of the Lord because they are always protected by him) (*basa hōhim̐ na bhagata udāra*).

Therefore, you should go now away with your companions and associates (representing allurements and temptations of comfort and pleasure derived from the sense objects of this material world, along with all the accompanying vices, evils and mischief they create) and camp at a place (*sahita sahāya tahām̐ basi aba*) near a person whose heart is vacant and bereft of devotion and love for Sri Krishna, the son of Nand (*jēhi hr̥daya na nandakumāra*)³.

[³This is an important stanza to establish that Tulsidas sees no difference between Sri Ram and Sri Krishna. Tulsidas means that a heart where Lord Sri Ram resides has no place for the delusions and negativities created by the world.] (4).

Those who are not aware of your secrets and deceitful manoeuvreings (i.e. those who are not aware of your cunning and evil nature; “*jō nahim̐ jānai marama tumhāra*”)—go and try your tricks with them (*tāsōm karahu cāturi*).

Only those who do not know the reality of a rope would die out of fear thinking it to be a snake (*sō pari ḍarai marai raju-ahi tēm, būjhai nahim̐ byavahāra*) (5).

Oh you stupid idiot (*saṭha*)! Listen to what Tulsidas is saying for your own good (*nija hita sunu*). If you want to have welfare for your own self as well as for all your associates (*jō cahahi kusala parivāra*), then don’t become stubborn (*haṭha na karahi*) and leave alone the devotees of Lord Ram (*tulasidāsa prabhukē dāsani taji*). Scoot forthwith away from them; go to a place where you find ego, arrogance and pride, as well as lusts and passions (*bhajahi jahām̐ mada māra*)⁴.

[⁴These negative factors form a breeding ground for all the faults and moral shortcomings associated with the world. Hence Tulsidas tells the world to go and live

there. Since the heart of the devotees of Lord Ram has no place for Mada and Kaam, it is also not a breeding place for negativities associated with the world.] (6).

The Palanquin/The Pilgrim's Journey through life

Rāga Gaurī

(189)

राम कहत चलु, राम कहत चलु, राम कहत चलु भाई रे।
 नाहिं तौ भव—बेगारि महुँ परिहै, छूटत अति कठिनाई रे।।1।।
 बाँस पुरान साज सब अठकठ, सरल तिकोन खटोला रे।
 हमहिं दिहल करि कुटिल करमचँद मंद मोल बिनु डोला रे।।2।।
 बिषम कहार मार—मद—माते चलहिं न पाउँ बटोरा रे।
 मंद बिलंद अभेरा दलकन पाइय दुख झकझोरा रे।।3।।
 काँट कुराय लपेटन लोटन ठावहिं ठाउँ बझाऊ रे।
 जस जस चलयि दूरि तस तस निज बास न भेंट लगाऊ रे।।4।।
 मारग अगम, संग नहिं संबल, नाउँ गाउँकर भूला रे।
 तुलसिदास भव—त्रास हरहु अब, होहु राम अनुकूला रे।।5।।

(189)

rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu bhā'ī rē.
 nāhiṁ tau bhava-bēgāri maham̐ parihai, chūṭata ati kaṭhinā'ī rē. 1.
 bām̐sa purāna sāja saba aṭhakāṭha, sarala tikōna khaṭōlā rē.
 hamahiṁ dihala kari kuṭila karamacam̐da manda mōla binu ḍōlā rē. 2.
 biṣama kahāra māra-mada-mātē calahiṁ na pā'um̐ baṭōrā rē.
 manda bilanda abhērā dalakana pā'iya dukha jhakajhōrā rē. 3.
 kām̐ṭa kurāya lapēṭana lōṭana ṭhāvahiṁ ṭhā'um̐ bajhā'ū rē.
 jasa jasa caliya dūri tasa tasa nija bāsa na bhēṇṭa lagā'ū rē. 4.
 māraga agama, saṅga nahiṁ sambala, nā'um̐ gā'um̐kara bhūlā rē.
 tulasidāsa bhava-trāsa harahu aba, hōhu rāma anukūlā rē. 5.

Verse no. 189—[In this wonderful verse, Tulsidas uses the metaphor of the Palanquin and its Bearers to describe the journey of the soul through various lives in this mundane world.

The Palanquin is an ancient mode of carrying passengers, especially members of the nobility, by bearers who carry this frame on their shoulders. It is a covered wooden vehicle, a carriage or a litter, with a framework that consists of a small bed or a few seats to seat the passenger, and this private space is enclosed by curtains on the sides. It is meant to carry one or two passengers, held aloft by two horizontal bamboo poles that are borne by bearers on their shoulders, usually in groups of four or six persons on each side, one group in the front and the other in the rear to lift and carry the carriage forward.

The bearer, like a beast of burden, has to carry this load for as long as he lives as it is his only livelihood to which he is seemingly bound by virtue of his destiny. It

is a very tiresome and difficult job to do as long distances are to be covered while carrying this burden on one's shoulders and walking on foot, often on rough terrains and harsh weather conditions, the task being made all the more difficult with the fear of punishment if the passenger, who is usually a member of the nobility and a rich person who are more often than not haughty, inconsiderate and of a whimsical nature, becomes angry at the bearers if they do not walk properly and the carriage swings uncomfortably for the rider.

But the poor bearer finds himself in a quandary: What will he do and how will he feed his own stomach if he does not carry the Palanquin, for this is the only thing he is destined to do and the only vocation he knows of due to his ill-fate? Well of course, if he is determined to break free from this serfdom or bondage to which he is seemingly bound for life, he can very well do it by learning some other skills to free and sustain himself. And if he indeed breaks free from the compulsion of carrying this heavy burden, he finds a lot of comfort, happiness and ease in his life.

This is what is hinted in this verse—if the soul is determined to break free from the cycle of birth and death and its incumbent miseries and horrors, it can easily do it, and the safest and surest method which does not require special skills is to have love, devotion and faith in Lord Ram. This idea is the central theme of this verse.

The bearers of this vehicle often sing some folk songs to break the monotony of the long journey as they tread along on their tedious path. Tulsidas advises the creature that his life is also like this journey, and he has to cover it on foot himself, i.e. he has to endure all the accompanying miseries and troubles of his life himself. If he wants to redeem himself and ensure that in the future he must not carry this burden again, then why does he not chant Lord Ram's holy name, which is the great redeemer and provider of freedom from the cycle of birth and death, even as he goes about his daily grind in life in the usual way? If he does so, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation would come to him unasked for and very easily.

In this metaphor, the soul is the 'passenger', the body is the 'Palanquin', the creature is the 'bearer'.]

'Oh brother (bhāī rē)! (I advise you that you must) Go on chanting and repeating Lord Sri Ram's holy name (even while you do your daily chores). I stress on this repeatedly (rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu)", because otherwise you'll be caught (trapped) in the slavery (bondage, fetters of surfrage) of this mundane world (i.e. in the myriad numbers of duties, responsibilities, allurements, sorrows, worries etc.—"nāhim tau bhava-bēgāri maham̐ parihai") which would be too difficult for you to shed (i.e. it would be too difficult for you to get freedom from the shackles of this gross mundane world) (chūṭata ati kaṭhināī rē)¹.

[¹It may be possible to break free from the slavery or serfage of a landlord or a king, but the vicious circle or cycle of birth and death in this mundane world will continue to trap you till the time true wisdom and true knowledge of the essence of the soul dawns upon you. To wit, till the time you do not become self-realised and enlightened enough to voluntarily renounce this world and its tempting attachments, you will continue to remain trapped in this vicious cycle of birth and death, and suffer endlessly from its incumbent miseries and horrors.

But oh brother, if you use the shield of Lord Sri Ram's holy and divine name then the enemies in the form of 'Maya' (a personified form of delusions and their associated prolema in this mundane world) would not be able to enlist you as a slave. That is to say, Maya and its spin-off problems would not disturb you in the least. The delusory effects of this gross material world that seems to give you pleasures and

comforts from enjoying its sensual objects that land you in a never-ending chain of problems that rob you of all peace and happiness would leave you alone.

This is because Maya is unable to wield her influence or spell on the servants or devotees of Lord Sri Ram, she being herself a maid of the Lord. This exemption is assured by Lord Sri Ram's name, and it is a guaranteed by the Lord himself—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 71.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45, (ii) Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 59; (iv) from Chaupai line nos. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 72; (v) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 90; and (vi) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 120.

All the above cited verses endorse the principle laid out in this present verse no. 189 of Vinai Patrika.] (1)

The cunning and wicked (kuṭila) ‘karamacamḍa’² has given us a very bad and dirty ‘khaṭōlā’³ free of cost (manda mōla binu ḍōlā rē)⁴ to ride in it during our journey through life.

Unfortunately this ugly and troublesome khaṭōlā has two old and worn-out rotten bamboo poles (‘bāmśa purāna’) attached to it, to lift and carry it forward⁵. All its accoutrements, decorations and furnishings are haphazard, odd and untasteful (sāja saba aṭhakāṭha)⁶, and the three seats provided in it are bare of even basic comfort (sarala tikōna)⁷.

[²Karamacamḍa is a personified form of our evil past deeds and their incumbent negative effects; this term is used as a derogatory epithet for someone whom we loathe but can’t avoid dealing with.

The ‘soul’ or the ‘Atma’ of a creature is his ‘true self’, his ‘true identity’. The creature dies and the Atma assumes a new body in its next birth, and the body that it is assigned is dependent upon the net effect of the aggregate of all the deeds it has done in its previous life. So it is possible that in its previous life a creature was born in a high family, but in the next birth he can be condemned to some lower form of life, say as a dog or a pig. It is because the deeds that this person had done while alive were so sinful and despicable that he had to be punished for them in the form of a lower life in his next birth. This works on the simple theory of action and result, or the doctrine of Karma which states essentially that a person reaps what he sows.

³The word ‘us’ refers to the creature, the living being in general. And the true identity of this creature is his Atma or his soul which is ‘pure consciousness’ and a subtle entity, and not the gross body that is physically present in the world and interacts with it. The ‘body’ is merely a vehicle or the ‘palanquin’ or the ‘khaṭōlā’ that carries the soul in its journey through life in this world. This so called ‘khaṭōlā’ is a storehouse of numerous problems that cause constant irritation for the soul and keeps the latter agitated. The soul’s journey through life is a repertory of countless miseries, unending grief, pains and tribulations of myriad kinds.

The construction of this khaṭōlā that represents the creature’s body is most despicable and ugly as it consists of nothing else but mucous, bones, veins, blood, stool, urine etc. Besides its physical construction, the body is full of negative qualities and characters, is prone to committing sins and evil deeds, and is more attracted to vices and tempted by evil forces than to good things and righteousness. This

‘khaṭōlā’ is dirty inasmuch as it lacks spiritual hygiene in the way of devotion, faith and love for the Lord God.

⁴The khaṭōlā or the gross body has been given to us, the ‘creature’, free-of-cost so that we grab it greedily as is our natural habit of accepting whatever is offered free of cost to us, in spite of knowing that this particular vehicle, the body, is full of inherent problems and causes so much misery to the rider, the soul. Ironically, the creature loves this ugly khaṭōlā because it helps the creature to enjoy the comforts and pleasures offered by the sense objects of the world and thereby gratify his natural urges irrespective of the fact that this causes more heartburn for him in the long run.

⁵The old and worn out ‘bamboo poles’ refer to the two negative qualities inherent in the creature, viz. ‘Avidya’ and ‘Moha’ which means ‘ignorance of the reality’ and ‘delusions that create attachments and longings for the world’ respectively. All sorts of ignorance, illusions, hallucinations, bewilderments etc. come under this category. These two negative qualities of Avidya and Moha control everything the creature does or thinks vis-à-vis the gross material world.

If the bamboo poles do not lift the ‘khaṭōlā’, the latter will rest quietly on the ground. Similarly, if these two negative virtues do not disturb the creature, the latter would live in peace and be happy even while living in this world.

⁶The ‘sāja saba’, i.e. the various ugly accoutrements, decorations and furnishings in this vehicle symbolised by the body refer to the countless shortcomings, flaws, faults and defects that it possesses. These are many, some of them are Kaam (passions), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed; rapacity), Mada (arrogance), Moha (attachments), Aviveka or Agyan (ignorance), Matsarya (jealousy, ill-will), Virodha (opposition and animosity), Bhaya (fear), and so on and so forth. All these factors add to the discomfiture caused to the soul that is already suffering from the decrepit condition of the ugly and uncomfortable ‘khaṭōlā’.

They all refer to the various evil tendencies of the mind which result in the body doing evil deeds and the creature is compulsively pushed forward on an evil path.

⁷The ‘sarala tikōna’ refers to the three bare seats provided in this ‘khaṭōlā’. Usually the seat is cushioned and made reasonably comfortable for the rider, but here it is simply exposed rough wooden plank. These ‘three seats’ refer to the three rewards a person gets for all his deeds done in this life, viz. ‘Artha’ or financial gains, ‘Kaam’ or fulfilment of desires, and ‘Sakaam Dharma’ or attaining worldly glory. They are likened to a ‘seat’ because the person is recognised and known by them; he rides on the glory and name acquired by these three rewards of his deeds.

It ought to be noted here that the fourth reward which would actually give the rider, the ‘soul’, peace and happiness is ‘Moksha’ or emancipation and salvation, which this ‘khaṭōlā’ lacks.

The ‘tikōna’ may also refer to the three windows or doors of this ‘khaṭōlā’ through which the rider, in this case the ‘soul’, looks out to the world and sets its destination or direction where it wants to go. They appear deceptively ‘sarala’ or simple because they are easy to achieve but do not give any worthwhile result for the long term good of the soul. The body remains engrossed in pursuing wealth, fulfilment of worldly desires, or acquiring fame and name by successful accomplishments in different fields. But they are ‘deceptive’ inasmuch as they have no sustainable benefit for the welfare of the soul either in this life or in the next.] (2).

The Bearers of this Palanquin (called ‘kahāra’) are ill-trained and odd in number and extremely difficult to keep in order (biṣama). The problem is further compounded by their being rogue and drunk with haughtiness and arrogance (māra-mada-mātē) so much so that they can’t walk properly and in step with each other (calahim na pā’um̐ baṭōrā rē)⁸.

The result is that the palanquin moves ahead in an erratic and jerky manner, sometimes too swiftly, sometimes too slowly, sometimes it swings upwards, sometimes plunges awkwardly downwards, and often times it sways to the left and the right (manda bilanda abhērā dalakana), causing the palanquin to toss and rock violently which causes extreme discomfort to the rider (the soul; pā’iya dukha jhakajhōrā rē).

[⁸Usually there are three pairs of bearers in the front and rear to lift the palanquin evenly so that it moves ahead smoothly. They are well trained and orderly in their movement. But the ‘bearers’ of this symbolic ‘khaṭōlā’ are only five in number, some are in pairs and some single, viz. the five sense organs of the body, such as the ears and the eyes which are in pairs, as well as the nose, the tongue and the skin which are single. The ‘khaṭōlā’ symbolised by the body is therefore asymmetrically made, and its movement is likewise odd and uncomfortable. The ‘movement’ here refers to the tendency of these above five organs of perception to reach out for their respective objects in the external world.

That is, the ‘eye’ wants to see things in the world; the ‘ear’ similarly wants to hear sounds arising in the outside world; the nose wishes to smell the fragrances of the world; the tongue wants to taste its things; and the skin wishes to feel the sensations of this world. In order to fulfil their desires, they have to ‘reach out’ or go out into the world. Once they do so, they feel tempted to move in the direction that appeals to them, dragging the unwilling but helpless soul behind them into the web of miseries and pain that result from the waywardness of these five organs.

Since these five organs would not listen to any sane advice given to them like a drunkard who refuses to hear to any reasoning, the symbolic bearers of this palanquin move ahead with an unsteady and disbalanced gait, rocking the ‘khaṭōlā’ to and fro.

Now, since the ‘khaṭōlā’ itself is old and decrepit, it cannot complain against the bearers who don’t and can’t walk in a balanced, uniform and steady gait. Therefore, the body sometimes does good deeds and sometimes evil deeds in an unpredicable manner, in an almost impulsive way. The five sense organs of speech, touch, smell, hearing and sight do not work in sync or harmony with each other. The resultant tugs and pulls are making life hell for the soul who rides this palanquin symbolised by the body of the creature.] (3).

The path is also not smooth as it is strewn here and there (ṭhāvahim ṭhā’um̐) with sharp thorns, stones and rocks, as well as with creepers and undergrowth (kāṃṭa kurāya lapētana lōṭana) that tangle the feet of the bearers and hinder their progress (bajhā’ū rē)⁹, adding to the troubles and miseries of the rider.

The more he moves ahead on this intractable forest path with its amazing array of illusions and distractions that cause a lot of heartburn to the rider, the further away he gets from his own homestead (where he would have got a lot of peace and happiness) (jasa jasa caliya dūri tasa tasa). He seems lost in this forest, with no one to show him the path (nija bāsa na bhēṇṭa lagā’ū rē)¹⁰.

[⁹In other words, in addition to the problems inherent to the body, there are untold numbers of existential problems in this world over which the creature has no control, but they can't be avoided or wished away if the creature has to survive in this world. So he has to cope with them and their whimsical nature. Some of these problems are related to other creatures, some to the evil stars, and still others to the fact that the individual is unable to adjust himself to his surroundings because of his stubbornness.

Here, the 'thorns' symbolise the miseries created by the sensual attractions of the material sense objects of the world; the different oppositions and adversities faced by the creature in attainment of his goal are like the many 'stones and rocks' that hinder his progress; the countless forms of lust, passions, attachments, infatuations and attractions that bind the creature to so many relationships that he develops in this world are like the 'creepers and the undergrowth' that tie the feet of the palanquin bearers.

To wit, the creature's path to salvation and emancipation is littered with thorns, sharp edged stones as well as poisonous creepers in the shape of various attachments, allurments, temptations and enticements of this world that cling to him like dirt covering the body during a long journey, and they cause immense hurdles, agonies and discomfiture to the traveller.

These hurdles force the palanquin to stop here and there. That is, the body is unable to reach its destination of devotion, worship, doing good and noble deeds etc. because of the hindrances caused by the tugs and pulls of this mundane world.

¹⁰Here, the person's own home refers to the realisation that his true 'self', which is pure consciousness and an image of the cosmic Consciousness as well as a source of peace and happiness, resides in his own heart, and that it is futile to search for peace and happiness in the outside world because these virtues can be found within one's own self. The truthful destination for the soul is finding emancipation and salvation for its self and breaking free from the vicious cycle of transmigration, and not in running after the objects of this world which would never give any sustainable happiness.

The more a creature gets entangled in the world, the more he loses his peace; the more he allows himself to do this the stronger and more stubborn his fetters become, and further away from the Truth and eternal source of happiness he is drawn.

As the mind and body go on sinking deeper into the quagmire of illusionary pleasures and hallucinations of this delusory world, the actual and truthful 'real-self' gets further away from the truth which recedes into the background.] (4).

Verily indeed, this path (through life in this mundane world) is very horrible and full of hurdles as described herein above (*māraga agama*), and there is no able companion to help out (*saṅga nahirṁ sambala*)¹¹, and the creature is so confused and overwhelmed with fear that he has lost the way to his destination (*nā'um' gā'um'kara bhūlā rē*)¹².

Tulsidas requests his merciful Lord Ram that in this precarious and dismal situation in which the soul has found itself, the Lord should now step in and show his grace and favour to it (*hōhu rāma anukūlā rē*) by giving it relief from its torments and free it from the horrors of this transmigratory world (*bhava-trāsa harahu aba*)¹³.

[¹¹There is no one to show the right path, too. Everyone in this world is driven by self-interest, and no one bothers about the suffering of the other person and his welfare. So if the miserable creature fails to have company of saints and pious people

who would show him the correct path that would be for his real good, then the creature is as good as being lost in a wild forest with no companion and hope of ever seeing his home where he would get peace and comfort again.

¹²In the confusion and chaos that surrounds the unlucky soul, it has forgotten about its true identity, which is not the body but pure and truthful 'consciousness', and also about its true destination, which is to find liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, and attain emancipation and salvation for its self, instead of getting involved in the affairs of this mundane world.

One forgets the name of the destination village out of bewilderments and agitations which have been caused by weariness and fatigue of the journey. The soul in other words has forgotten the ultimate goal of life, which is attainment of the supreme holy feet of Lord Sri Ram, of being 'one' with the Lord and disrupting the vicious cycle or circle of birth and death for all times to come.

¹³Tulsidas asks Lord Ram to please show mercy and compassion on this soul and remove its fears arising out of this ocean-like world of birth and death.] (5).

[Note :- By using the analogy of the 'rider' and the 'palanquin', Tulsidas describes the consternations and the precarious conditions of the soul during its journey through various lives in this gross mundane world. It was foolish enough for it not to walk the distance, the path, on its own, i.e., use its own discrimination and wisdom to reach the destination which is the Lord himself in this case. But, due to its indolent, lazy and lethargic habits, it thought to sit comfortably on a carrier called the human body, and being thus becoming dependent on it, it had to not only lose the ultimate goal or destination but suffer intemperately, interminably due to the wayward, reckless inclinations of its vehicle, which is the body in this case. Another error of the soul, or the 'true-self', was not taking control of the steering wheel and let the vehicle be driven by the driver in the form of Kaliyug. What can it hope from such a driver—he would not only dash the vehicle somewhere, but also never let the soul ever reach its destination. A great and serious message is being conveyed through this analogy by Tulsidas. I think another suitable title for this verse could be '*The Pilgrim's Journey through life*'.]

The selfish world

(190)

सहज सनेही रामसों तैं कियो न सहज सनेह ।
तातें भव-भाजन भयो, सुनु अजहुँ सिखावन एह ॥1॥
ज्यों मुख मुकुर बिलोकिये अरु चित न रहै अनुहारि ।
त्यों सेवतहुँ न आपने, ये मातु-पिता, सुत-नारि ॥2॥
दै दै सुमन तिल बासि कै अरु खरि परिहरि रस लेत ।
स्वारथ हित भूतल भरे, मन मेचक, तन सेत ॥3॥
करि बीत्यो, अब करतु है, करिबे हित मीत अपार ।
कबहुँ न कोउ रघुबीर सो नेह निबाहनिहार ॥4॥
जासों सब नातो फुरै, तासों न करी पहिचानि ।
तातें कछू समुझ्यो नहीं, कहा लाभ कह हानि ॥5॥
साँचो जान्यो झूठको, झूठे कहँ साँचो जानि ।

को न गयो, को जात है, को न जैहै करि हितहानि॥६॥
 बद कह्यो, बुध कहत हैं, अरु हौंहुँ कहत हौं टेरि।
 तुलसी प्रभु साँचो हितू, तू हियकी आँखिन हेरि॥७॥

(190)

sahaja sanēhī rāmasōm taim̐ kiyō na sahaja sanēha.
 tātēm bhava-bhājana bhayō, sunu ajahum̐ sikhāvana ēha. 1.
 jyōm mukha mukura bilōkiyē aru cita na rahai anuhāri.
 tyōm sēvatahum̐ na āpanē, yē mātu-pitā, suta-nāri. 2.
 dai dai sumana tila bāsi kai aru khari parihari rasa lēta.
 svāratha hita bhūtala bharē, mana mēcaka, tana sēta. 3.
 kari bityō, aba karatu hai, karibē hita mīta apāra.
 kabahum̐ na kō'u raghubīra sō nēha nibāhanihāra. 4.
 jāsōm saba nātō phurai, tāsōm na karī pahicāni.
 tātēm kachū samujhyō nahīm̐, kahā lābha kaha hāni. 5.
 sām̐cō jān'yō jhūṭhakō, jhūṭhē kaham̐ sām̐cō jāni.
 kō na gayō, kō jāta hai, kō na jaihai kari hitahāni. 6.
 bēda kahyō, budha kahata haim̐, aru haunhum̐ kahata haur̐ ṭēri.
 tulasī prabhu sām̐cō hitū, tū hiyakī ām̐khina hēri. 7.

Verse no. 190—[Addressing himself on behalf of the common creature, Tulsidas says—] You have not shown natural love and affection towards Lord Sri Ram (rāmasōm taim̐ kiyō na sahaja sanēha) who is affectionate and loving by nature (i.e. the temperament and habit of the Lord is to be exceedingly lovable, understanding, compassionate and accomodating) (sahaja sanēhī).

Verily, this is the reason why you have become a 'creature of the world' ("tātēm bhava-bhājana bhayō"; i.e. you are identified as being one among the countless living beings who have been deluded and ignorant enough to fall into the trap of birth and death repeatedly, and suffer in its wake). But its never too late—so you would be well advised to pay heed to my teaching and my sincere word of advice for your own good (sunu ajahum̐ sikhāvana ēha) (1).

The mirror only reflects the image of the face, but in actual fact that face is not inside the mirror; the image of the mirror is not the true self of a person (jyōm mukha mukura bilōkiyē aru cita na rahai anuhāri).

Likewise, all these worldly kinsfolk and relations such as parents, wife, son, friend, brother (yē mātu-pitā, suta-nāri)—all seem to be serving us, helping us, belonging to us, but they are reflected in the mirror of 'Maya' (delusions) because they serve us only as long as we are of some use to them, and as soon as we cease to be of any value to them they would turn away from us (tyōm sēvatahum̐ na āpanē). [They lose interest in us and vanish from sight once their objective is served much like the image of a mirror that vanishes into thin air once the principal object is removed.] (2).

Aromatic flowers are usually kept in a heap of sesame seeds to make them scented (dai dai sumana tila bāsi kai), but as soon as the oil is extracted from them, the

useless outer shell is thrown away as being absolutely useless (aru khari parihari rasa lēta).

Verily, the same thing is applicable to the relatives and kinsfolk in this world (svāratha hita). [They are all selfish and motivated by self-interests. They accompany and give respect only till the time their interests are served, thereafter no one even bothers to talk with us and ask how we are.]

Such selfish people whose hearts are dark but the bodies are fair are abundant in this world (bhūtala bharē, mana mēcaka, tana sēta). [They apparently look very pleasing, friendly, helpful and attractive, but this exterior is misleading because they all pretend to be courting and showing affection for us so that we continue to serve their self-interest. Deep inside their hearts they are dark because they are driven by selfishness.] (3).

You had made so many friends, are making them still, and shall make them in future, thinking that they are your trustworthy companions (kari bityō, aba karatu hai, karibē hita mīta apāra).

But remember that you shall never find a friend who is as stable, as consistent and as steadfast in upholding the vows of friendship as Lord Sri Ram (kabahum̃ na kō'u raghubīra sō nēha nibāhanihāra).

[To wit, the Lord shall be your true, trustworthy, eternal and abiding friend, and he shall stand by with you shoulder to shoulder, and come to your aid when no one does; the Lord will stand by you in good stead.] (4).

Alas! You have never identified yourself with, made an acquaintance with, or have introduced yourself to the Lord (Sri Ram) (tāsōm̃ na karī pahicāni), due to whom all the relationship appear to be true and fruitful (jāsōm̃ saba nātō phurai).

This is why it is deemed that you could not understand the essence (or the reality) of wherein lies your truthful gain and what is your real loss (tātēm̃ kachū samujhyō nahīm̃, kahā lābha kaha hāni)¹.

[¹To wit, you could not understand who will give you eternal peace and happiness—are the many relationships that you have developed in this world your true companions and well-wishers, or is it Lord Ram who is so? Well, haven't you realised that the relations of the world are driven by self-interests, and it is Lord Ram alone who is a selfless well-wisher of yours.

The world honours and respects you because the Lord has shown grace upon you by blessing you with certain good qualities that have made you worthwhile and valuable. Otherwise, no one would bother for you. The Lord has made you capable to serve others and empowered you sufficiently with skills and wherewithal so that you can look after your dependants well. If it was not so, those same people who flock to you for favours would turn their heads to the other side when they see you anywhere. Say, why don't you realise this truth.] (5).

Those who are so stupid and ignorant enough that they have treated what is false and illusionary as being true and real (“sām̃cō jān'yō jhūṭhakō”; i.e. such as treating this world to be the real source of comfort and happiness), and regarded what is the ultimate, real, absolute and incontrovertible truth as being false (“jhūṭhē kaham̃ sām̃cō jāni”; i.e. such as the Lord God and the existence of the pure conscious soul)—who amongst such foolish creatures has not ruined (or sacrificed) his real welfare and well-being in this world (kari hitahāni).

There are countless such ignorant and deluded creatures who had ruined their lives in the past, are doing so in their present lives, and verily indeed there would be many more such in the future as well who shall continue to ruin their lives and chances to find freedom from this trap of delusions and ignorance (kō na gayō, kō jāta hai, kō na jaihai kari hitahāni).

[In short, these stupid, ignorant fools have wasted their lives in vain without achieving their real and true goal in life, which is attaining liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation of the soul.]

The Vedas have asserted (bēda kahyō), the experts have declared (budha kahata haim), and I (Tulsidas) also proclaim loudly (aru haunhum kahata haum ṭēri) that the benevolent ‘Lord of Tulsidas’ (“tulasī prabhu”; i.e. Sri Ram) is the true and sincere well-wisher, friend and benefactor of all (sām̐cō hitū).

Open your eyes and see the truth (tū hiyakī ām̐khina hēri)! (7).

Lord Śrī Rāma is the true benefactor of a creature;

The benevolent Lord is the best well-wisher of all

(191)

एक सनेही साचिलो केवल कोसलपालु ।
 प्रेम-कनोड़ो रामसो नहिं दूसरो दयालु ।।1।।
 तन-साथी सब स्वारथी, सुर व्यवहार-सुजान ।
 आरत-अधम-अनाथ हित को रघुबीर समान ।।2।।
 नाद नितुर, समचर सिखी, सलिल सनेह न सूर ।
 ससि सरोग, दिनकरु बड़े, पयद प्रेम-पथ कूर ।।3।।
 जाको मन जासों बँध्यो, ताको सुखदायक सोइ ।
 सरल सील साहिब सदा सीतापति सरसि न कोइ ।।4।।
 सुनि सेवा सही को करै, परिहरै को दूषन देखि ।
 केहि दिवान दिन दीन को आदर-अनुराग बिसेखि ।।5।।
 खग-सबरी पितु-मातु ज्यों माने, कपि को किये मीत ।
 केवट भेंट्यो भरत ज्यों, ऐसो को कहु पतित-पुनीत ।।6।।
 देइ अभागहिं भागु को, को राखै सरन सभीत ।
 बेद-बिदति बिरुदावली, कबि-कोबिद गावत गीत ।।7।।
 कैसेउ पाँवर पातकी, जेहि लई नामकी ओट ।
 गाँठी बाँध्यो दाम तो, परख्यो न फेरि खर-खोट ।।8।।
 मन मलीन, कलि किलबिषी होत सुनत जासु कृत काज ।
 सो तुलसी कियो आपुनो रघुबीर गरी-निवाज ।।9।।

(191)

ēka sanēhī sācilō kēvala kōsalapālu.
 prēma-kanōrō rāmasō nahim̐ dūsarō dayālu. 1.

tana-sāthī saba svārathī, sura vyavahāra-sujāna.
 ārata-adhama-anātha hita kō raghubīra samāna. 2.
 nāda niṭhura, samacara sikhī, salila sanēha na sūra.
 sasi sarōga, dinakaru baṛē, payada prēma-patha kūra. 3.
 jākō mana jāsōm bam̐dhyō, tākō sukhadāyaka sō'i.
 sarala sīla sāhiba sadā sītāpati sarasi na kō'i. 4.
 suni sēvā sahī kō karai, pariharai kō dūṣana dēkhi.
 kēhi divāna dina dīna kō ādara-anurāga bisēkhi. 5.
 khaga-sabarī pitu-mātu jyōm māmē, kapi kō kiyē mīta.
 kēvaṭa bhēṇṭyō bharata jyōm, aisō kō kahu patita-punīta. 6.
 dē'i abhāgahim bhāgu kō, kō rākhai sarana sabhīta.
 bēda-bidati birudāvalī, kabi-kōbida gāvata gīta. 7.
 kaisē'u pāmvara pātakī, jēhi la'i nāmakī ōṭa.
 gāmṭhī bām̐dhyō dāma tō, parakhyō na phēri khara-khōṭa. 8.
 mana malīna, kali kilabiṣī hōta sunata jāsu kṛta kāja.
 sō tulasī kiyō āpunō raghubīra garī-nivāja. 9.

Verse no. 191—Lord Sri Ram, the King of Kaushal (Ayodhya) (kōsalapālu), is the only Lord who is truly one's dearest and most affectionate kin (ēka sanēhī sēcilō kēvala).

In fact, the merciful Lord Ram is the only one who feels exceedingly obliged, grateful and indebted to a person who shows even a slight amount of devotion and affection for him, and therefore there is no one like him anywhere in this world (prēma-kanōṛō rāmasō nahim dūsarō dayālu) (1).

All those who have claim to be one's friends and say that they have some kind of relationship with him, verily, all of them are motivated by some or the other kind of self-interest (i.e. everyone is selfish) (tana-sāthī saba svārathī)¹.

[¹The so-called close friends as well as the kith and kin profess their affection and dearness for us only as long as we use our body to serve them and meet their expectations from us. But in the sad eventuality when we fail to meet their demands and their hopes from us, they turn indifferent to us. During the times when a person finds himself in dire straits and is greatly distressed, no one would volunteer to help him, especially if it means some sort of problem to the other person if he helps us. Everyone would first ensure his own welfare before even considering to help others.]

Even the Gods are very clever in their dealings with a creature (sura vyavahāra-sujāna)².

[²To wit, the Gods give boons or rewards according to the services rendered to them. They would oblige only, and that also to a limited degree and scope, when the worshipper offers them their due share of offerings, even if it means a lot of sacrifice, hardship and sufferance on the part of the worshipper. The Gods do not fulfil one's desire if tributes are not paid to them. If there is any negligence on this front, or if one fails to show due respect to them, they get easily annoyed and wrathful, and show their displeasure by wreaking vengeance and retribution upon the offender.]

In all sooth and without any gainsay, is there anyone else except Lord Ram who would selflessly, and without any expectation of any kind, do good for those who are overcome with grief, who are sorrowful, distressed, miserable, destitute, humble, meek, lowly, deprived, downtrodden, and in need of urgent solace and succour, who

have no other resources to help them in need? (*ārata-adhama-anātha hita kō raghubīra samāna*)³.

[³The unequivocal answer to this question is: None else but Lord Ram is such a magnanimous, benevolent, kind, gracious and generous Lord who would volunteer to take care of the lowly and the needy, without thinking twice. Besides Lord Sri Ram, who else bothers to take care of and looks after the welfare of the distressed, miserable, downtrodden, humble, meek and destitutes in a selfless manner? None indeed!

This stanza in particular, and the verse in general, builds up on the idea expressed earlier in verse no. 190 herein above that all the relations in this world revolve around selfish interests. It is only Lord Ram who is one's selfless friend, benefactor and well-wisher who would go out of his way to help and protect those who have surrendered before the Lord and have even a small amount of devotion and love for him.] (2).

[Now look at the fate of lovers which are narrated in the following stanza. Here the subtle aspect of love is highlighted, and the examples cited show how a creature who expresses sincere and selfless love for something is almost invariably cheated by others who exploit the object of his love to trap and exploit him to serve their own vested interests.]

The melody and emotional charm of the 'music' of an instrument are very cruel (for a hunter uses this to attract a deer towards the trap, which results in the animal's capture and the endless agony it is subjected to in the wake, may be ultimately resulting in its death) (*nāda niṭhura*).

Likewise, the 'fire' treats all alike and spares none, not even those who have respect it (*samacara sikhī*). [For example, the moth, which is attracted to a flame because it is enamoured by its light and splendour, is burnt by the fire of the flame. The fire does not realise before burning the moth that it had come near only to express its affection and appreciation for the light of the flame. Is it not too cruel and selfish for the fire to burn someone who loves its light and splendour just to boast of its reputation of sparing none and treating all alike? Couldn't the fire make an exception for the moth considering the latter's undiluted affection for it? But it does not.]

Even the 'water' is not brave enough to uphold and has no regrets to rescind on the promises of endearment, care and protection that it has made to the world as a life-giving and life-sustaining element of creation (*salila sanēha na sūra*). [For instance, the fish cannot survive its separation from water because it loves the water dearly. But if the fish is not careful it would die in the same water when attacked by some bigger aquatic creature, or is caught by a bait dangling in the same water which it loves so much, but in both the cases the water does not come to its aid by shielding it and protecting it against its enemy. If the fish falls sick and dies, the water would not tolerate its presence and begin to stink as a sign that it wants the fish out of it as soon as possible.]

The 'moon' is also internally diseased (i.e. mentally stern and cruel in its heart) though it looks so charming and pleasing from the outside (at its face value) (*sasi sarōga*). [The moon appears so beautiful to look at and is even praised by poets as a favourite of lovers. But look how stern and rock-hearted it is internally—the bird called 'Chakor', the Indian Partridge, is so enamoured of it that it continues to gaze at its beautiful face and expects the moon to drip nectar into its beak so that it would

quench its thirst, but the moon never ever obliges the Chakor and the latter dies of thirst. Often it is said that the Chakor would pick up ambers of fire and try to eat it to coax the moon to show mercy at it and give the nectar, but the moon shows no pity on it and lets it die of burns and thirst.]

The ‘sun’ also pretends to be very exalted as it occupies a high and mighty position in the world so much so that it cares nothing for the trouble it is creating for ordinary and humble creatures who may suffer under its scorching heat as it moves proudly on with haughtiness and arrogance across the path of the sky (*dinakaru barē*). [For instance, the lotus flower feels so happy at the sight of the sun that it keeps its petals open to express its delight. But the merciful sun would scorch them soon and force them to close by its relentless heat.]

And even the ‘cloud’ is unduly and unjustifiably very harsh in the realm of love though it seems to be very benevolent and generous as it selflessly gives to the world the much needed rain for its survival (*payada prēma-patha kūra*). [A bird called ‘Chatak’, a cuckoo, loves the cloud so much that it promises that it would not drink water from any other source except the drops of rain the cloud itself gives into its open beak. But the cloud does not oblige. On the contrary, the cloud thunders, rumbles and shows its anger at the Chatak by darts of blinding streaks of lightening to scare it. Often times the cloud would shower hail stones to thrash and injure it also.] (3).

But what can be done; when one is enamoured by any entity and loves it, he gets happiness, joy and contentedness solely from this entity (*jākō mana jāsōṃ bam̐dhyō, tākō sukhadāyaka sō'i*)⁴.

[⁴Even insults, rebuffs, rebukes, harsh words, slights, indifference, rejections, snubs, or outright hate and loathing expressed by the object of one’s adoration and love won’t effect a person’s intensity of love and enchantment towards his beloved entity. On the contrary, a person who is in love with another does not mind being subjected to any sort of insult and slight, or being neglected and snubbed for his overtures of love for the latter, because he treats the indifference of the beloved towards him as mere teasing and posturings by the latter to test his sincerity of love and devotion for him.]

In my (Tulsidas’) considered view, there is no other relationship which is as dear and lovable, as enduring and endearing as the one with Lord Ram, the dear of Sita, because the Lord is exceptionally simple-hearted, courteous, cordial, welcoming and virtuous by his inherent nature (*sarala sīla sāhiba sadā sītāpati*). Hence, truly and without gainsay I can assert that there is no other Lord in this world like Lord Ram (*sītāpati sarasi na kō'i*)⁵.

[⁵This is because whereas all other relations in this world whom a person thinks to be dear and expects them to stand by him in life during some trying time may turn selfish and harsh towards him at a certain point when their self-interests are affected adversely in life, but relation with Lord Ram is the only sweet relationship that is abiding, for the Lord is eternally kind and merciful, never turning his back to his devotees and never letting them feel insulted and neglected. Lord Ram will stand by his devotees in all situations of life, whether they are favourable or not.] (4).

[This stanza outlines the exceedingly gracious and benevolent nature of Lord Ram who goes out of his way to accept even those who don’t deserve any grace because of their sinful and faulty character.]

Who else (but Lord Ram) would willingly and cheerfully acknowledge that any service, howsoever small it may be, has been done to him in any manner (by a person; by any creature; by a devotee or a servant) as soon as it is merely mentioned, and he would immediately endorse that such service has indeed been done (without waiting to verify whether it has been actually done or not) (*sunī sēvā sahī kō karai*)?

Who else (but Lord Ram) would willingly overlook or ignore the misdemeanours, sins, faults, crimes, transgressions and other follies (of his devotees or servants) before granting (them) his grace and blessing, before granting them refuge and accepting them in his shelter (*pariharai kō dūṣana dēkhi*)?

In whose royal court (other than that of Lord Ram) (*kēhi divāna*) are the lowly, the distressed, the impoverished, the humble and the wretched ones treated with special respect, given kind attention and shown honour (*dina dīna kō ādara-anurāga bisēkhi*)? [In all sooth and without any gainsay, such a Lord is only Sri Ram, and none else in this world.]⁶

[⁶To wit, the Lord is willing to do so because this would pave the way for the person who has come to seek his blessings to become eligible for it. The Lord knows fully well that if he sticks to the rule book and subjects all applicants to close scrutiny, then out of millions of them only a few would qualify for receiving his grace and boons. But the Lord does not want even a single creature to suffer and its soul to be condemned if it is willing to mend its way. The mere thought of a person that ‘I will serve the Lord in the way I can’ is enough for the Lord to accept the service.

After all, Lord Ram is the merciful and loving Supreme Father of the world who, like any other father, would wish that none of his off-springs would have to suffer from their misdeeds because the Lord knows that to err and commit mischief is a natural habit of a living being, and perfection in one’s deeds and thoughts and behaviour is an exception rather than the norm. So, if Lord Ram becomes too strict in judgement and verifications of credentials by putting every creature under the lens, the whole world would suffer interminably as rarely would there be a creature who is perfect and clean in every respect, and hence the purpose of Lord Ram to try his best to salvage the fallen souls would be defeated. Therefore he adopts a lenient view that overlooks ordinary transgressions.] (5).

Who has regarded the bird (the vulture Jatau) and Sabari (the tribal woman) as his father and mother respectively (*khaga-sabarī pitu-mātu jyōm mānē*)⁷?

Who has made monkeys (like Sugriv and Hanuman) his friends (*kapi kō kiyē mīta*) (and given them the respect and trust that one would usually give to a long and time tested friend)⁸?

He (Sri Ram) met Guha-Nishad and embraced him like he was his own dear brother Bharat (*kēvaṭa bhēṇṭyō bharata jyōm*)⁹.

Say, who else (other than Lord Ram) is a greater purifier (or a liberator) of those who are sinful, those who are fallen, evil, vile and corrupt culprits (*aisō kō kahu patita-punīta*)?

[⁷Refer: Vinai Patrika, verse no. 179, stanza no. 4; verse no. 180, stanza no. 6; and verse no. 183, stanza no. 2 in this context.

⁸Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede Doha no. 3 where Lord Ram has told Hanuman that the latter is like Laxman, the Lord’s younger brother, for him; and (ii) Doha no. 4 followed by Chaupai line no. 1 that proceeds it where Lord Ram has befriended Sugriv, the prince of the monkey race.

⁹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 20 where Lord Ram has expressly said this to Nishad-Guha—“that the Lord regards him as if he were the Lord’s younger brother Bharat”.] (6).

Say, who grants good fortune and gives good luck to those who are unfortunate and unlucky (dē'i abhāgahim bhāgu kō)?

Who keeps those who are frightened and terrified in his shelter and gives them his protection (kō rākhai sarana sabhīta)? [Normally a person would hesitate to give shelter to such people as they may cause problem for him. But Lord Ram is willing to accept them and grant them immunity from fear and uncertainty.]

Whose fames, glories and virtues are being sung by the Vedas (bēda-bidati birudāvalī), and who is being praised and his glories being sung by the poets, the bards and the learned ones (kabi-kōbida gāvata gīta)?

[The answer to all these questions is unanimously and unequivocally this: ‘Such a Lord is only Sri Ram, and surely no one else!'] (7).

All those who have taken shelter with and refuge in the Lord’s holy name (“RAM”—“jēhi la’i nāmakī ōṭa”), no matter how sinful, vile, mean, despised and detestable they might be (kaisē'u pāmvara pātākī), all of them were willingly accepted by Lord Sri Ram even as someone immediately grabs and ties into a bundle any sort of wealth that is available (gāmṭhī bāmḍhyō dāma tō), and does not bother or wait to judge about its utility, validity or worth by examining it closely and separating the worthwhile part from the useless one (parakhyō na phēri khara-khōṭa)¹⁰.

[¹⁰For instance, when one comes across an unsorted heap of coins which is available for grabs, he would not waste time to sort out the good and valuable coins and discard the useless ones, or try to judge their market value and usefulness to him at that time. He would immediately, and as soon and fast as he can, scoop up the heap of coins, make a rough bundle of it and scoot from there lest some other person comes and claims his right over the coins. Likewise, when Lord Ram sees some sinful but distraught person at his door, begging for mercy from the Lord, he is so moved by compassion and his love for the distressed souls that he does not think twice before accepting the seeker and granting him fearlessness from all sufferings.

This is the greatness of the Lord and his merciful nature for which he is so much lauded and extolled by the scriptures and the wise ones.] (8).

[Now, citing his own example to buttress the assertions made about Lord Ram’s graciousness, compassion, mercy, kindness and benevolence, Tulsidas says—] ‘This Tulsidas is so corrupt, so wicked and so perverse in his mind and heart (mana malīna) that anyone who hears the list of evil deeds done by him during Kaliyug would himself become sinful and corrupt (kali kilabiṣī hōta sunata jāsu kṛta kāja)—even that Tulsadas was accepted by him (Lord Sri Ram) as his own servant (i.e. as his follower, devotee, subordinate, dependant, ward, refugee) (sō tulasī kiyō āpunō).

Verily indeed, in all sooth, and without gainsay or any exaggeration in the least, Lord Sri Raghubir (Sri Ram) is such a gracious, benevolent, merciful and magnanimous protector, sustainer and benefactor of the poor and the wretched ones (raghubīra garī-nivāja) that he has cheerfully accepted even such a sinful and burdensome person as Tulsidas (sō tulasī kiyō āpunō)!’ (9).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Śrī Rāma's Holy Name

(192)

जो पै जानकिनाथ सों नातो नेहु न नीच ।
 स्वारथ—परमारथ कहा, कलि कुटिल बिगोयो बीच ॥1॥
 धरम बरन आश्रमनिके पैयत पोथिही पुरान ।
 करतब बिनु बेष देखिये, ज्यों सरीर बिनु प्रान ॥2॥
 बेद—बिदित साधन सबै, सुनियत दायक फल चारि ।
 राम—प्रेम बिनु जानिबो जैसे सर—सरिता बिनु बारि ॥3॥
 नाना पथ निरबानके, नाना बिधान बहु भाँति ।
 तुलसी तू मेरे कहे जपु राम—नाम दिन—रात ॥4॥

(192)

jō pai jānakinātha sōm nātō nēhu na nīca.
 svāratha-paramāratha kahā, kali kuṭila bigōyō bīca. 1.
 dharama barana āśramanikē paiyata pōthihī purāna.
 karataba binu bēṣa dēkhiyē, jyōm sarīra binu prāna. 2.
 bēda-bidita sādhana sabai, suniyata dāyaka phala cāri.
 rāma-prēma binu jānibō jaisē sara-sarita binu bāri. 3.
 nānā patha nirabānakē, nānā bidhāna bahu bhāmṭi.
 tulasī tū mērē kahē japu rāma-nāma dina-rāta. 4.

Verse no. 192—Oh you wicked and dumb-witted fellow (nīca)! If you have not established any relationship with Jankinath (Lord Ram, the Lord of Sita—“jānakinātha”) that is based on the grand and auspicious qualities of having affection and devotion for the Lord and submitting yourself before the Lord (jō pai jānakinātha sōm nātō nēhu na), say then how can you achieve success in your endeavours, whether they are related to your self interest in this temporal life or are concerned with your spiritual matters? (svāratha-paramāratha kahā).

Since you are so foolish that you have not been able establish any such relationship with Lord Ram, even though it would have been for your own good and welfare, it is apparent and obvious that this wicked and cunning bandit known as ‘Kaliyug’ seems to have established his own sway upon you and has robbed you mid-way (kali kuṭila bigōyō bīca)¹.

[¹Verily, a bandit in the form of ‘Kaliyug’ (the present age in a personified form) has managed to waylay you and rob you of your spiritual fortunes by corrupting your mind and intellect, by eclipsing your wisdom and discriminating powers so that you are not even inclined to judge for yourself what is detrimental for you and what is for the best in your own interest. You are not able to understand that your good lies in

establishing an abiding relationship with Lord Sri Ram who can ensure your spiritual and temporal well-being and happiness. Instead, impelled and lured by the charms thrown to you by Kaliyug in the form of temptations of this material world of sensual objects, you seem to have drifted away from Lord Ram and fallen into the embrace of your enemy, the Kaliyug, even without being aware of your mistakes because Kaliyug has overshadowed your wisdom and intellect. Say, aren't you aware that you are ruining your own future under the deluding effects of Kaliyug? So, aren't you utterly stupid and block-head that you can't even see what is good or bad for you?] (1).

[This stanza describes the state of affairs in the society during the corrupt age of Kaliyug.]

The principles of Dharma (or codes of proper and righteous conduct) that are expected to be followed by the people in the four Varnas in the society (i.e. the four segments of society, such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra) and in the four Ashrams of life (i.e. the four divisions in life—Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Sanyas, Vanprastha)² (dharama barana āśramanikē) are limited only to the thick volumes (pages) of the Purans (ancient scriptures) (paiyata pōthihī purāna); no one bothers to practice them and act according to these principles.

People sport external marks and bear outward appearances of a particular Varna or Ashram they are supposed to belong to or subscribe to as prescribed for the members of the society in the scriptures, but they do so just as a formality and as merely an obligation so that they are not declared apostate and outcaste, and instead are able to integrate themselves into the mainstream of the society. But the fact is that none of these people who pretend to be followers of Dharma by adopting the external signs prescribed by it actually have even a trace of faith and conviction in the noble principles of Dharma as laid down by these scriptures. They rarely practice any of the tenets of the particular Varna or Ashram of whose mark and other paraphernalia they exhibit.

Therefore, in the absence of belief and commitment, in the absence of relevant and concurrent action and deed to back up these external signs or marks that one bears in accordance to the advisory of the scriptures, they have been rendered mere pretentious exhibitions (karataba binu bēṣa dēkhiyē). [People exhibit these external signs and marks to show that they are following the principles of religion and being faithful to them, but in actuality this is a deceitful and cunning act because no one follows the tenets laid down in the scriptures that are supposed to be followed by every person in the society. Hence, all these marks and signs and paraphernalia have been rendered useless, perfunctory, superficial and pretentious; they not only mean that the person is cheating his own self but also those around him.]

It is like the case of a body without life or Pran in it; a body that is dead and inane because it lacks consciousness inside it (jyōm sarīra binu prāna)³.

[²Refer: Verse no. 179, stanza no. 4 of this book Vinai Patrika in this regard.]

³Here, external pretensions of Dharma without relevant and concurrent action and deed to back it up is merely for show as it lacks any substance and meaning. It is like a gross body decorated with ornaments, but which lacks life. Say, what good is there in decorating a dead body? Verily, a living person who has great merit but may lack any kind of decorative paraphernalia is highly honoured by those who are wise, as compared to a mere statue which may be adorned by priceless ornaments but otherwise has no use to the society.] (2).

It is heard (*suniyata*) that the many famous and powerful means, ways and paths described in the Vedas that one follows to attain one's desired objectives in life, both the temporal as well as the spiritual objectives (such as religious sacrifices, penances, austerities, meditation etc.—“*bēda-bidita sādhanā sabai*”), are all able to grant the four traditionally honoured rewards to the seeker and the aspirant (*dāyaka phala cāri*)⁴.

[⁴The four rewards honoured in the scriptures as being the fruits of one's endeavours that are done in accordance with the principles of Dharma are the following: (i) Artha (wealth, prosperity), Dharma (righteousness, noble conduct), Kaam (fulfilled desires, passions), and Moksha (emancipation and salvation).]

But it should be understood that without the primary fruit in the form of devotion and love for Lord Ram (*rāma-prēma binu jānibō*), all of them should be treated as being like so many rivers and lakes that are without water (*jaisē sara-sarītā binu bāri*)⁵.

⁵To wit, just like so many great rivers and lakes would be useless without there being water in them, all the rewards and trophies in this world would lack value if their awardee lacks love and devotion for Lord Ram. Just like the intrinsic value and importance of any water-body lies in the purity, the cleanliness and the amount of water it has and not on its dimensions or location or even its charming surroundings, the hidden value and worth of a person lies in the glorious virtue of devotion and love for the Lord God that he has in his inner-being rather than the worldly achievements he has made or acclaim he has got for himself in this world due to his merits and deeds. Devotion and love for the Lord is what gives sheen and glow to other noble virtues that a man possesses.] (3).

There are indeed myriads of ways and paths for obtaining salvation and liberation of soul (from the worldly bondage), and each has its own merits (*nānā patha nirabānakē, nānā bidhāna bahu bhāmṭi*).

But nevertheless oh Tulsidas, pay heed to my sincere advice and chant or repeat Lord Sri Ram's holy name night and day (*tulasī tū mērē kahē japu rāma-nāma dina-rāta*). [If you do so, if you follow my advice, then you will not have to run from pillar to post seeking end to your miseries and torments in this world. It is evident here that Tulsidas is addressing himself.] (4).

Pay attention to Lord Śrī Rāma's merciful, compassionate, benevolent nature

(193)

अजहुँ आपने रामके करतब समुझत हित होइ ।
 कहँ तू कहँ कोसलधनी, तोको कहा कहत सब कोइ ।।1।।
 रीझि निवाज्यो कबहिँ तू कब खीझि दर्ई तोहिँ गारि ।
 दरपन बदन निहारिकै, सुबिचारि मान हिय हारि ।।2।।
 बिगरी जनम अनेककी सुधरत पल लगै न आधु ।
 'पाहि कृपानिधि' प्रेमसों कहे को न राम कियो साधु ।।3।।
 बालमीकि—केवट—कथा, कपि—भील—भालु—सनमान ।
 सुनि सनमुख जो न रामसों, तिहि को उपदेसहि ग्यान ।।4।।

का सेवा सुग्रीवकी, का प्रीति-रीति-निरबाहु।
जासु बंधु बध्यो ब्याध ज्यों, सो सुनत सोहात न काहु।।5।।
भजन बिभीषनको कहा, फल कहा दियो रघुराज।
राम गरीब-निवाजके बड़ी बाँह-बोलकी लाज।।6।।
जपहि नाम रघुनाथको, चरचा दूसरी न चालु।
सुमुख, सुखद, साहिब, सुधी, समरथ, कृपालु, नतपालु।।7।।
सजल नयन, गदगद गिरा, गहबर मन, पुलक सरीर।
गावत गुनगन रामके केहिकी न मिटी भव-भीर।।8।।
प्रभु कृतग्य सरबग्य हैं, परिहरु पाछिली गलानि।
तुलसी तोसों रामसों कछु नई न जान-पहिचानि।।9।।

(193)

ajahum' āpanē rāmakē karataba samujhata hita hō'i.
kaham'tū, kaham' kōsaladhanī, tōkō kahā kahata saba kō'i. 1.
rījhi nivājyō kabahim' tū, kaba khījhi da'ī tōhim' gāri.
darapana badana nihārikai, subicāri māna hiya hāri. 2.
bigarī janama anēkakī sudharata pala lagai na ādhu.
'pāhi kṛpānidhi' prēmasōm kahē kō na rāma kiyō sādhu. 3.
bālamīki-kēvaṭa-kathā, kapi-bhīla-bhālu-sanamāna.
suni sanamukha jō na rāmasōm, tihi kō upadēsahi gyāna. 4.
kā sēvā sugrīvakī, kā prīti-rīti-nirabāhu.
jāsu bandhu badhyō byādha jyōm, sō sunata sōhāta na kāhu. 5.
bhajana bibhīṣanakō kahā, phala kahā diyō raghurāja.
rāma garība-nivājakē baṛī bāmha-bōlakī lāja. 6.
japahi nāma raghunāthakō, caracā dūsarī na cālu.
sumukha, sukhada, sāhiba, sudhī, samaratha, kṛpālu, natapālu. 7.
sajala nayana, gadagada girā, gahabara mana, pulaka sarīra.
gāvata gunagana rāmakē kēhikī na miṭī bhava-bhīra. 8.
prabhu kṛtagya sarabagya haim', pariharu pāchilī galāni.
tulasī tōsōm rāmasōm kachu na'ī na jāna-pahicāni. 9.

Verse no. 193—[In verse no. 192, Tulsidas has exhorted a creature to devote himself to Lord Ram and submit himself to the Lord if he wants his own good. In this present verse, that idea is further extended and stressed.]

Even now at this late stage if you first realise how wicked and evil is your nature and how wicked are your deeds, and then recognise the exceptionally noble qualities, the outstanding virtuous nature and merciful ways of Lord Sri Ram, then it is still possible to have your welfare and happiness assured (ajahum' āpanē rāmakē karataba samujhata hita hō'i).

On the one hand are you who is so selfish, pretentious and sinful (kaham'tū), and on the other hand is Lord Ram, the Lord of Kaushal (Ayodhya) who is so pure and holy (kaham' kōsaladhanī)¹. [What comparison is there?]

People believe that you are holy too (inspite of you being the opposite), and so they repose faith in what you say (tōkō kahā kahata saba kō'i)².

[¹This is because you would be astonished at your own sinful ways and the resultant gloomy future that stares in your face. You would have heard how people like you suffer interminably, and this may make you feel distraught and dismayed at your fate. But have heart; nothing is lost yet! Remember Lord Ram is always there to salvage your otherwise doomed fate—for the Lord is so merciful and compassionate and committed to provide help to sinners like you that as soon as you surrender to the Lord and beg his attention, be assured that the Lord would pick you up and embrace you.

²You have been proclaiming that you are a devotee of the Lord, and by experience you can say that one would find peace, happiness and liberation by surrendering before the Lord; you have been very vociferous in this regard. But is it a fact? Well, how nice would it be if you actually follow what you preach others.

But, honestly, are you what they think you to be, are you worthy of such an honour. Aren't you ashamed at yourself? People call you a devotee of Sri Ram, and therefore they treat you with the same honour as they would give to the Lord, because a Lord's devotee is as worthy of respect as the Lord himself. But are you worthy of it.

Never mind. It is still not too late to wake up and mend your ways. Walk the talk and become a true and real devotee of Lord Ram, instead of pretending to be one.] (1).

Oh! Look at your self in the mirror (of discrimination, wisdom, intellect—“*darapana badana nihārikai*”) and find out when has Lord Sri Ram showered compassion, grace and mercy upon you (*rījhi nivājyō kabahim tū*), and when has he showed his annoyance, irritation and wrath on you, or has ever abused or insulted you (*kaba khījhi daī tōhim gāri*)³?

[³If you examine things in detail and in the correct perspective, you will discover that never has even once the Lord showed any bitterness for you inspite of your wicked and evil nature. On the contrary, the Lord has been ever so graceful towards you. Realise what would have been your fate if the Lord would have judged you merely on the basis of your nature and deeds? Don't you know how vile and corrupt and sinful they are? So don't you understand that the Lord had virtually turned a blind eye to all your misdeeds and transgression in order to ensure that you do not suffer. Given this situation, why are you not obliged and grateful to the Lord. Why are you still hesitating to accept the Lord as your redeemer and protector? Well, ponder over this matter seriously.]

So, be wise and well advised to abandon stubbornness, accept your shortcomings, and surrender before the Lord (*subicāri māna hiya hāri*)⁴.

[⁴You must understand that the Lord has never been angry at you despite your countless shortcomings. So you must never accuse Lord Sri Ram that he is being negligent or indifferent towards you inspite of your being an ardent follower or devotee of his.] (2).

Oh! The Lord takes not more than a moment to rectify the ruinous (or disastrous) state of affairs in which one has landed due to cumulative effects of countless sins and misdeeds done over many lives and generations in the past, and liberate one from their attendant miseries and horrors (*bigarī janama anēkakī sudharata pala lagai na ādhu*).

One needs only to plead with the Lord to be granted instant relief from all miseries and grief. One need only say with faith and affection for the Lord, “Oh

merciful Lord; Save me; Protect me”, and the redemption is then and there (‘pāhi kṛpānidhi’ prēmasōṃ kahē).

Forsooth, which sinful soul is there that has not been made holy and pious by Lord Ram by his merely saying so little to the Lord (kō na rāma kiyō sādhu)⁵.

[⁵The Lord does it instantly and as soon as one calls out to him for protection and solace. But these words should be sincere, coming out from the deep recesses of the heart, and not mere formality to tide over immediate problems. You can't cheat and be smart with Lord Sri Ram as you have been accustomed to in your dealings with the world, so beware!] (3).

Those who have not taken shelter in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram and come to seek his grace even after hearing (sunī sanamukha jō na rāmasōṃ) the stories of Valmiki, Guha-Nishad etc. (bālamīki-kēvaṭa-kathā), and the honour, veneration and fame bestowed upon Sugriv, Hanuman, Sabari, the bear Jamvant etc. (kapi-bhīla-bhālu-sanamāna)—who can preach to that ignorant idiot the virtues of having knowledge, wisdom, righteousness, true essence of the scriptures, and the correct path one ought to follow in this mundane existence (tihi kō upadēsahi gyāna)? [It would be a futile exercise.] (4).

What great services had Sugriv rendered to Lord Ram (kā sēvā sugrīvākī), and which code of love and affection did he follow or uphold (kā prīti-rīti-nirabāhu)? [He had even forgotten to search for Sita after being crowned as the king of Kishkindha⁶.]

But Sri Ram had killed his brother Baali for his sake like a cruel hunter (“jāsu bandhu badhyō byādha jyōṃ”—in spite of the life long ignominy and blemish that he got on his good name because of this single act which was deemed biased in favour of Sugriv)⁷.

No one (except devotees) approves of this deed/act of Sri Ram (of killing someone from hiding and being partisan or biased) (sō sunata sōhāta na kāhu)⁸.

[⁶This is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 21.

⁷This is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, from Doha no. 6—to Doha no. 8.

⁸Lord was so moved by the miserable condition in which he found Sugriv when he first met him on the mountain of Kishkindha and by the injustice done to him by his elder brother Baali that the Lord decided to rectify the wrong done even if it would invite a lifetime of ignominy and scorn for taking sides with Sugriv in what essentially was a mutual dispute arising out of some misunderstanding between two brothers. A more conciliatory and diplomatic approach could have been more in order for the Lord to adopt, such as attempting to negotiate some sort of settlement between Sugriv and Baali, instead of outright instigating Sugriv to fight his own brother and then killing his adversary who was given no chance to defend himself.

What does Tulsidas mean here? The basic difference between Sugriv and Baali was that while the former had surrendered himself to Lord Ram and sought his blessing, Baali had refused to do so in spite of his wife Tara warning him not to confront Sugriv and advising him to surrender before Lord Ram. Had Baali heeded his wife's advice, it is sure and certain that Lord Ram would never had acted against him no matter what Sugriv pleaded or what injustice was done to him. This is narrated

in specifically in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 7 along with Chaupai line nos. 28-29 that precede it.

Well, the idea is that if one surrenders to Lord Ram and seeks the Lord's blessings, then no matter how sinful and wrong he may be the Lord would always take his side.] (5).

What special sort of devotion did Vibhishan have (*bhajana bibhīṣanakō kahā*), and look at the (magnificence, the immensity and the majesty of the) reward that Lord Sri Ram gave him (to indicate his happiness that Vibhishan, who was a demon by birth, would have even a trace of devotion for the Lord inside his heart, something unusual about a demon) (*phala kahā diyō raghurāja*)?⁹

[The reason why Lord Ram accepted Vibhishan and abundantly rewarded him is this—] The fact is that Lord Sri Ram is very conscious and diligent about his characteristic nature, about his reputation and glory as the one who gives unquestioned protection to those who have come to seek refuge or shelter with him so much so that he just wouldn't deny this privilege to anyone who comes to the Lord with a prayer on his lips, asking the Lord for the support of his arms (*rāma garība-nivājakē barī bāmha-bōlakī lāja*). [The Lord simply cannot deny those who are distressed and in grief the grant of succour and solace to them.]¹⁰

⁹Vibhishan had come out of selfish interest to seek refuge with Lord Ram after he was rebuked and kicked out of Lanka by his own elder brother Ravana. Joining hands with the enemy of the state is a very serious crime, a seditious and an unpatriotic act, a rebellion, a treachery. But, despite being guilty of committing this grave crime, Lord Sri Ram accepted him smilingly, without having any doubts in his mind about his integrity, or hidden agenda and intentions, even overruling objections by his ministers in this respect who were sceptic of Vibhishan's real objective, and instead rewarded Vibhishan with the crown of Lanka. This episode is narrated in detail in epic "Ram Charit Manas", Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

¹⁰Verily, the Lord would even overlook their past deeds or some selfish intentions that they may have in their hearts at the time of welcoming them and extending his mercy to them. For it is well established that once anyone comes and takes refuge at the holy feet of Lord Ram, then whatsoever faults and evils that he may have had earlier are automatically neutralised and eliminated. The creature who takes shelter with Lord Ram and is blessed by the Lord's mercy is purified of all his sins and corruptions instantly.

Lord Ram has himself declared that he is obliged to accept a person who has come to seek refuge and shelter with him, and to refuse this gracious gesture would undermine the Lord's greatness and glory, and would go against his compassionate, merciful and benevolent nature. Besides this, anyone who has come to the Lord and faces him is sure to be purified instantly, as a creature with a dark heart and pervert mind just cannot come in front of the bright and dazzling 'light of consciousness' that emanates from inside the Lord's own heart; no darkness survives in the presence of light. These facts are reiterated in "Ram Charit Manas", Sundar Kand, Doha no. 43 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it.] (6).

This is why you should constantly and consistently chant Lord Raghunath's holy name (*japahi nāma raghunāthakō*). You will be well advised not to talk of anything else (and waste your time and energy—"caracā dūsarī na cālu")¹¹.

Verily and in all sooth, Lord Ram has so many glorious virtues like no other Lord: His demeanours and countenance are affable, cheerful, pleasant, sweet and friendly (*sumukha*); He gives and is a source of comfort and happiness (*sukhada*); He is a most gracious, obliging and courteous Lord who possesses excellent virtues and characters (*sāhibā*); He is wise, intelligent and all-knowing as well as skilled in all principles and doctrines related to auspiciousness, righteousness and noble conduct (*sudhī*); He is all-able, all-empowered and competent in every manner (*samaratha*); He is merciful, compassionate, kind and gracious (*kṛpālu*); He is the Lord who grants acceptance as well as fearlessness, solace and succour to those who bow before him to seek refuge and shelter at his holy feet (*natapālu*).

[¹¹Remember, you will never find anywhere a Lord more gracious and more glorious than Lord Ram. The Lord is the only one who is sweet and pleasant to approach and look forward to for one's welfare and good as he never turns anyone away, never uses a harsh word for anyone, sports a pleasant smile on his face, and is ever ready to welcome and oblige everyone. So, why should you waste time wandering and discussing about so many other Lords and Masters whom a creature can approach for his protection and welfare when it is well established that there is no other such Lord or Master anywhere in this world. Remember, even if you find some Lord or Master whom you think would help you in fulfilling your needs, don't forget that all of them are driven by some degree of self-interest. Refer verse nos. 190-191 herein above. So be wise and concentrate on Lord Ram as the one-point where all your spiritual and temporal needs would be fully met. The next stanza reiterates this view.] (7).

Who is there whose miseries related to life in this world (“*kēhikī na miṭī bhava-bhīra*”; the torments of birth and death; his temporal and spiritual problems) have not been eliminated if he had sung (praised and lauded) the excellent virtues, the famed glories and the exalted nature of Lord Sri Ram (*gāvata gunagana rāmakē*) with tears (of affection, devotion, dedication, emotions) in his eyes (*sajala nayana*), with an exultant voice overwhelmed with gratitude and thanksgiving for the Lord (*gadagada girā*), with an affectionate and submissive mind that is dedicated to the Lord and soaked in his grace (*gahabara mana*), and a body that is emotionally thrilled while doing so (i.e. while singing the Lord's glories and by remembering the Lord; “*pulaka sarīra*”)?

[To wit, one should sing the glories of the Lord and praise him with full devotion, dedication and love for the Lord in his heart.] (8).

Stop repenting and lamenting about your past (*pariharu pāchilī galāni*). [Think for the present and the future because you can still redeem yourself now and here if you follow the advice outlined in this verse.]

Lord Sri Ram is of a very obliging nature (and he goes out of his way to accommodate everyone who comes to seek his blessings and mercy, irrespective of the creature's past) (*prabhu kṛtagya haim*). [So therefore, you need not worry about your tainted past, for as soon as you stand before the Lord with a prayer on your lips, be assured that the Lord would welcome you lovingly. The Lord would pardon you and efface all your past misdeeds from the scroll of your life so that there would be no fear of future punishment based on your past evil life.]

He is all-knowing: the Lord knows what is covert as well as overt, concealed as well as open and apparent, implied, intended or explicitly expressed, past as well as future. Verily, nothing is hidden from the Lord (*sarabagya hairṁ*).

Oh Tulsidas! You are not a new acquaintance for Lord Sri Ram (*tulasī tōsōṁ rāmasōṁ kachu na'ī na jāna-pahicāni*). [To wit, you are well-known to him; so why do you have to worry about your past or your present; just have immense faith in the Lord and everything will be alright.] (9).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Everything is futile without having affection and devotion for Śrī Rāma

(194)

जो अनुराग न राम सनेही सों ।
तौ लह्यो लाहु कहा नर-देही सों ॥1॥
जो तनु धरि, परिहरि सब सुख, भये सुमति राम-अनुरागी ।
सो तनु पाइ अघाइ किये अघ, अवगुन-उदधि अभागी ॥2॥
ग्यान-बिराग, जोग-जप, तप-मख, जग मुद-मग नहीं थोरे ।
राम-प्रेम बिनु नेम जाय जैसे मृग-जल-जलधि-हिलोरे ॥3॥
लोक बिलोकि, पुरान-बेद सुनि, समुझि-बूझि गुरु-ग्यानी ।
प्रीति-प्रतीति राम-पद-पंकज सकल-सुमंगल-खानी ॥4॥
अजहुँ जानि जिय, मानि हारि हिय, होइ पलक महँ नीको ।
सुमिरु सनेहसहित हित रामहिं, मानु मतो तुलसीको ॥5॥

(194)

jō anurāga na rāma sanēhī sōṁ.
tau lahyō lāhu kahā nara-dēhī sōṁ. 1.
jō tanu dhari, parihari saba sukha, bhayē sumati rāma-anurāgī.
sō tanu pā'i aghā'i kiyē agha, avaguna-udadhi abhāgī. 2.
gyāna-birāga, jōga-japa, tapa-makha, jaga muda-maga nahim thōrē.
rāma-prēma binu nēma jāya jaisē mṛga-jala-jaladhi-hilōrē. 3.
lōka bilōki, purāna-bēda suni, samujhi-būjhi guru-gyānī.
prīti-pratīti rāma-pada-paṅkaja sakala-sumaṅgala-khānī. 4.
ajahum' jāni jiya, māni hāri hiya, hō'i palaka maham' nīkō.
sumiru sanēhasahita hita rāmahim, mānu matō tulasīkō. 5.

Verse no. 194—What is the benefit (utility, purpose, fruit) of acquiring a human body if (*tau lahyō lāhu kahā nara-dēhī sōṁ*) one does not have (or does not develop) affection and endearment for the most affectionate and dearest Lord Sri Ram (*jō anurāga na rāma sanēhī sōṁ*). [To wit, the best use of this human body is to be able to use it to develop devotion and affection for the Lord God, for otherwise it is just like the body of other animals.] (1).

By acquiring this human body (*jō tanu dhari*), those who are wise and intelligent (*sumati*) develop affection and devotion for Lord Ram (*bhayē rāma-anurāgī*) even as they discard all attachments to and lust for the sense objects of this material world (*parihari saba sukha*).

But oh you fallen and unfortunate fool (*abhāgī*), inspite of acquiring the same human body you have only used it to enhance your sins and vices, and you have committed all sorts of misdeeds and transgression (*sō tanu pā'i aghā'i kiyē agha, avaguna-udadhi*)¹.

[¹You have frittered away this opportunity and wasted this chance by committing sins and misdeeds by the hoardes and till your stomach was full of it. Despite knowing about the value of the human body as a means by which you could have rectified your past record of misdeeds and sins so as to ensure a good spiritual destiny for yourself, you have stupidly ignored it, and instead indulged yourself in enjoyment of the sense objects of the world and remained engrossed in the affairs of the gross mundane world. Even after receiving that most rare body of a human being, you had committed countless sins till your tummy was literally full of it—i.e. till the time you could do it no more. The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly has been repeatedly stressed in Vinai Patrika at a number of places. Some of the instances are verse nos. 83-84, 102, 130, 135/1, 151, 198-202 etc.] (2).

There is no dearth or shortage of auspicious paths that are very potent in leading one to the attainment of supreme bliss (that is obtained when the individual's soul attains one-ness with the supreme Soul of creation which is pure Consciousness; the state of existence that transcends the grossness of life and achieves a sublime and subtle level of exaltedness). (*jaga muda-maga nahim thōrē*).

Some of this acclaimed paths and established means are the following: Gyan (acquisition of truthful spiritual knowledge; enlightenment and wisdom), Vairagya (renunciation of all material and deluding things pertaining to this gross world), Yoga (meditation), Japa (repetition of the holy Mantras), Tapa (penances and austerities), Yagya (religious sacrifices and sacraments). (*gyāna-birāga, jōga-japa, tapa-makha*).

But in all sooth and without gainsay, expecting any reward or result from any or all of these paths and means is a worthless and futile exercise as they are all ineffective in delivering expected results if one does not have devotion and affection for Lord Ram just like (*rāma-prēma binu nēma jāya jaisē*) seeing currents of water in a large lake or sea that is formed in a mirage on the surface of a hot desert sand (*mr̥ga-jala-jaladhi-hilōrē*)².

[²To wit, just like attempting to find water in a mirage is foolish because the lake or an oasis seen in it is due to an optical illusion caused by refraction of the sun's rays on the surface of hot desert sand, so is an attempt to find true bliss by practicing any or all of the paths listed in this stanza if one does not have the key to this bliss—and it is having devotion and affection for Lord Ram.

The reason why these potential powers have lost their effectiveness and fail to deliver expected results has been outlined in other verses of this book Vinai Patrika where the degradations and transgressions of Kaliyug are described. For instance, refer verse nos. 139, 173, 184 and 195.] (3).

By closely observing and analysing this gross temporal world (“lōka bilōki”; i.e. by understanding about the world’s deluding, illusionary, entangling, preying and selfish nature), by hearing what has been said in the scriptures such as the Vedas and Purans (purāna-bēda suni), and by discussing and consulting the matter with wise elders, teachers and those who are experienced and well-versed in this field (samujhi-būjhi guru-gyānī), one comes to the conclusion that having faith, affection, love and devotion in the holy lotus-like feet of Lord Sri Ram (prīti-pratīti rāma-pada-paṅkaja) is the only source, the only fount and treasury where one would get auspiciousness and ensure one’s all round welfare and good, both in the temporal world as well as in the spiritual sphere (sakala-sumaṅgala-khānī) (4).

If even now you understand the truth of all this (ajahum̐ jāni jiya) and accept defeat (“māni hāri hiya”; i.e. abandon your haughtiness and arrogance even as you surrender yourself in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram, praying to the Lord to save you from the horrifying effects of Kaliyug), then your all-round welfare and good can be secured instantly (hō’i palaka maham̐ nīkō)³.

Pay heed to this one teaching, one singular advice of Tulsidas (mānu matō tulasīkō)—constantly remember Lord Sri Ram who is a sincere, affectionate, selfless, benevolent and merciful benefactor and well-wisher of all (sumiru sanēhasahita hita rāmahim̐).

[³Tulsidas advises that a person should stop thinking that he would achieve spiritual bliss and salvation by practicing other paths outlined in stanza no. 3 because he is capable of and competent in pursuing these paths; he has full knowledge of these paths as he has studied the scriptures and discussed them with elders who are knowledgeable. This person is fully convinced of his abilities and resources to be able to achieve his objective. But he is very mistaken—because he will never attain either bliss or salvation and emancipation of the soul if he does not have the key to this treasury, and this ‘key’ is to have faith, devotion and love for Lord Ram.] (5).

Tulasīdāsa prays to Lord Śrī Rāma for mercy

(195)

बलि जाउँ हौं राम गुसाई। कीजै कृपा आपनी नाई।।1।।
 परमारथ सुरपुर—साधन सब स्वारथ सुखद भलाई।
 कलि सकोप लोपी सुचाल, निज कठिन कुचाल चलाई।।2।।
 जहँ तहँ चित चितवत हित, तहँ नित नव बिषाद अधिकाई।
 रुचि—भावती भभरि भागहि, समुहाहिं अमित अनभाई।।3।।
 आधि—मगन मन, ब्याधि—बिकल तन, बचन मलीन झुटाई।
 एतेहुँ पर तुमसों तुलसीकी प्रभु सकल सनेह सगाई।।4।।

(195)

balī jā’um̐ hauṁ rāma gusā’im̐. kījai kṛpā āpanī nā’im̐. 1.
 paramāratha surapura-sādhana saba svāratha sukhada bhalā’ī.

kali sakōpa lōpī sucāla, nija kaṭhina kucāla calā'ī. 2.
jaham' taham' cita citavata hita, taham' nita nava biṣāda adhikā'ī.
ruci-bhāvatī bhabhari bhāgahi, samuhāhirṁ amita anabhā'ī. 3.
ādhi-māgana mana, byādhi-bikala tana, bacana malīna jhuṭhā'ī.
ētēhum' para tumaṣōṁ tulasikī prabhu sakala sanēha sagā'ī. 4.

Verse no. 195—Oh my dear Lord Sri Ram (rāma gusā'īm)! I extol you for your auspicious virtues, and praise you exceedingly for your exceptionally gracious and compassionate nature (bali jā'um' hauṁ).

Verily, I submit myself humbly before you, with full devotion and faith in your benevolent nature, with a prayer that you show graciousness and kindness towards me as is your wont and natural habit (kījai kṛpā āpanī nā'īm)¹.

[¹This second statement “kījai kṛpā āpanī nā'īm” can also be interpreted as follows: “Oh Lord, show mercy, grace and compassion upon me (kījai kṛpā) as if I was one of your own, as if I was closely related to you (āpanī nā'īm), the way you treat your other devotees as being very dear and near to you.”

To wit, I am confident and sure that you will be gracious and merciful to me because I know that this to be your inherent nature and habit; I have no doubt about it. And for this greatness of yours, I profusely praise you and publicly laud you.] (1).

All the different auspicious paths that are established as the means by which a creature can attain happiness and fulfilment, whether it is related to his spiritual welfare and feeling of blessedness, or for the attainment of an exalted state of existence in life that is equivalent to that of heaven (paramāratha surapura-sādhana saba svāratha sukhada bhalā'ī)—all of them have been overshadowed and concealed by the darkness cast angrily by Kaliyug (the present era marked by wickedness, perversions, sins and evil) so much so that they aren't even discernible, what to talk of actually understanding and following them or practicing them successfully (kali sakōpa lōpī sucāla)².

On the other hand, the malicious and deceitful Kaliyug, in order to subjugate the world and enslave the creature, has played its own trick and has managed to spread the tentacles of corruptions, perversions and evil tendencies so overwhelmingly over the entire world that vices of all denominations, sinful temperament, moral and mental turpitude, transgressions and degradations have become all-pervasive and the domineering factors today all over the world (nija kaṭhina kucāla calā'ī).

[²Kaliyug has been personified in this verse. It is angry because it does not like anyone to follow a path that is against its wishes—for Kaliyug is selfish and a tyrant, and it wants that the creatures serve it like slaves used to serve conquering emperors for as long as they lived, without any hope of freedom and empowerment.

Kaliyug's cunning mechanisms and deceitful manoeuvrings prevent the creature from following the auspicious and righteous path as laid down by the scriptures for his own well-being and good just as slave-keeping tyrannical emperors did not want their slaves to access education and freedom of speech, for they did not want them to be empowered and enabled so that they can keep them under the bondage of slavery or serfdom for life.

Some of the auspicious paths that one is expected to follow for one's all-round spiritual and temporal well-being are practicing the principles of Shama and Dama

(tolerance and self-restraint), Kshama (forgiveness), Tapa (penance and austerity), Yoga and Dhyān (meditation and contemplation), Satya (truth) and so on and so forth.

The cunning Kaliyug has concealed all these paths, and in their place it has introduced its own crafty methods and corrupt codes of conduct such as falsehood, vanity, pride, deceit, trickery, pretensions, discord, criticism, apostasy, heresy and hearsay—compositely known as Dhambha, Kapat, Ninda, Andhaviśwas etc.

The worst thing is that Kaliyug is very powerful and is the monarch of the present time. It is in Kaliyug's realm or kingdom that we all live in the present time. Even as it is impossible for the subjects to defy the dictates of a ruling king or emperor in whose domain they live, the creature has to unwittingly and unwillingly submit to the wishes of Kaliyug, for otherwise the creature's life would be made hellish.

The menace caused by Kaliyug and the horrors it creates have been described by Tulsidas elsewhere also, such as in his epic book "Ram Charit Manas", Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 97—to Doha no. 104 ka; and in "Kavitawali", Uttar Kand, verse nos. 83-88.

Refer also to verse nos. 139, 173, 184, 194 (stanza 3) of this book Vinai Patrika in this context of the moral and mental turpitudes, the degradations, perversities, depravations, transgressions of all dimensions and denominations that are not only so characteristic of Kaliyug but are also on the ascendance, while there is a negation and decimation of all good and righteous virtues during this era.] (2).

Wherever this mind tries in this world to search for peace, happiness, joy, welfare and compatibility with self-interest (*jaham̐ taham̐ cita citavata hita*), it only finds the opposite, it discovers that miseries, grief, pain, worries, sorrows and tribulations go on escalating by each passing day (*taham̐ nita nava biśāda adhikāṭi*).

Those good things which appeal to the mind (or rather, those things that the mind wishes to have because it thinks that one's good and happiness lie in them) run away from a distance (i.e. elude, evade, go beyond the reach of the seeker—"ruci-bhāvatī bhabhari bhāgahi"), while those which are unwanted, abhorable and detested come uninvited. One yearns for joys but gets miseries and sorrows in return (*samuhāhiraṁ amita anabhāṭi*)³.

[³To wit, all the good and virtuous ideals and qualities are simply beyond reach of the mind during the corrupt era of Kaliyug, and no matter how hard one tries they go beyond one's reach. On the contrary, one gets easily those things not at all intended, such as easy access and mental acceptance of vices, perversions, corruptions and deceit of all sorts and dimensions. They come in un-asked, un-invited and unsought, like an unexpected guest who is so sweet talking, pretentious and cunning with his words that the host welcomes him into the house to give him shelter for a few days. But as it eventually turns out, the wicked guest is so notorious, powerful and domineering that he prevails upon his host to let him stay for some more time by showing to be so affectionate, friendly and helpful to him that the innocent and unwary host does not realise the trap he is falling into. The poor host is not even aware of the uninvited guest's notoriety and evil nature. By and by, this wicked fellow starts blackmailing the host and forcing himself upon him by deceit and trickery. Soon a time comes when this guest occupies the whole space of the house for himself and pushes the host out into the street.

Literally the same thing happens vis-à-vis all the vices and corruptions associated with Kaliyug. In the beginning the creature thinks that the world and all its sense objects are so charming and useful to him, and so he gets tempted towards them

and willingly allows himself to be attached or hooked to them. Then like the greedy fish that bites the bait, the creature finds himself trapped and shackled in a tight vice-like grip of Kaliyug.] (3).

The Mana (mind) seems to be numbed and in a state of delirium caused by endless worries and anxieties (*ādhi-magana mana*), the body is agitated and tormented by diseases and other physical sufferings (*byādhi-bikala tana*), and the speech is becoming increasingly untruthful, offensive and dirty (abusive) (*bacana malina jhuthā'i*)—but oh merciful and considerate Lord Ram, inspite of all these adversities and sufferings that have made me so troubled that I am not able to focus on anything good and worthwhile (*ētēhum para tumasōm*) you have still maintained your grace and affection upon me, your kind relationship with this Tulsidas remains stable and unwavering as ever, it is unaffected and uninfluenced by these adverse factors which have tossed me and made me lose my bearings (*tulasikī prabhu sakala sanēha sagā'i*).

[To wit oh Lord, this shows how great and merciful you are indeed and without any gainsay!] (4).

The vagrant Mind

(196)

काहेको फिरत मन, करत बहु जतन,
मिटै न दुख बिमुख रघुकुल-बीर।
कीजै जो कोटि उपाइ, त्रिबिध ताप न जाइ,
कह्यो जो भुज उठाय मुनिबर कीर॥1॥
सहज टेव बिसारि तुही धौं देखु बिचारि,
मिलै न मथत बारि घृत बिनु छीर।
समुझि तजहि भ्रम, भजहि पद-जुगम,
सेवत सुगम, गुन गहन गँभीर॥2॥
आगम निगम ग्रंथ, रिषि-मुनि, सुर-संत,
सब ही को एक मत सुनु, मतिधीर।
तुलसिदास प्रभु बिनु पियास मरै पसु,
जद्यपि है निकट सुरसरि-तीर॥3॥

(196)

kāhēkō phirata mana, karata bahu jatana,
miṭai na dukha bimukha raghukula-bīra.
kījai jō kōṭi upā'i, tribidha tāpa na jā'i,
kahyō jō bhuja uṭhāya munibara kīra. 1.
sahaja ṭēva bisāri tuhī dhauṁ dēkhu bicāri,
milai na mathata bāri ghṛta binu chīra.
samujhi tajahi bhrama, bhajahi pada-jugama,
sēvata sugama, guna gahana gaṁbhīra. 2.

āgama nigama grantha, riṣi-muni, sura-santa,
saba hī kō ēka mata sunu, matidhīra.
tulasidāsa prabhu binu piyāsa marai pasu,
jadyapi hai nikaṭa surasari-tīra. 3.

Verse no. 196—[In the context of the ideas expressed in this verse, refer also to other similar verses, especially nos. 196 and 199 of this book Vinai Patrika.]

Oh Mana (my mind)! Why do you wander aimlessly (**kāhēkō phirata mana**) trying to make so many different types of efforts to remove your miseries and troubles, and find peace and happiness for your self (**karata bahu jatana**)?

Remember, as long as you remain away from (or opposed to) Lord Sri Ram (who is known as ‘the brave warrior of King Raghu's clan’; “**bimukha raghukula-bīra**”), you cannot find what you are trying to, you cannot achieve success in your objectives (**miṭai na dukha**)¹.

In spite of adopting millions of strategies or doing myriads of efforts (**kījai jō kōṭi upā'i**), the heat or torments caused by the three Traitaps of this world² cannot be removed (and coolness and peace restored without turning towards Lord Sri Ram for help—“**tribidha tāpa na jā'i**”).

This fact has been declared by sage Shukdeo with raised arms (**kahyō jō bhuja uthāya munibara kīra**)³.

[¹To wit, unless the Mana decides to seek peace and happiness in the holy feet of Lord Ram, and in having devotion and affection for the Lord, no matter how hard it tries it can never ever find true peace and happiness. What it gets by pursuing the world in search of these virtues is pain and misery. In this context, refer to verse no. 143 and verse no. 195, stanza no. 4, line no. 1 herein above in this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.

²The three ‘Traitaps’ of the world that create endless misery for a person are the following: “Adhyatmic”—spiritual sufferings; “Adhibhautic”—sufferings associated with life in this gross world and caused by interaction with its selfish inhabitants and deluding things; and “Adhidaivic”—sufferings caused by opposed gods and malignant stars.

³Sage Shukdeo has made this proclamation with a raised hand to affirm that it is his final verdict in this matter and there is no gainsay in it, or doubt in the veracity of its truth. He is certain of it and declares it as an established edict of the scriptures.] (1).

This being the case and the fact, you would be well advised to abandon your natural wayward tendencies, your intransigent nature, your stubbornness, your ego and false knowledge, and forget about them now onwards (if you want to have your own welfare) (**sahaja tēva bisāri tuhī**).

In its place you should contemplate seriously and think for yourself (**dhaurṇ dēkhu bicāri**), with concerted effort and due diligence, whether it is ever possible to produce Ghee (oil, clarified butter) by churning water instead of milk (**milai na mathata bāri ghr̥ta binu chīra**)⁴? [No, its not possible. Likewise, it is also not possible to get your welfare by following the world and remaining indulgent in it.]

Realising this for your own sake, forsake all delusions, doubts, confusions and bewilderments (**samujhi tajahi bhrama**), and instead worship these two holy feet of

Lord Sri Ram (*bhajahi pada-jugama*) which are easily accessible by devout service, sincere faith and true affection (*sēvata sugama*).

Forsooth, these holy feet of the Lord are like a dense forest of noble virtues, divine qualities and excellent characteristics (*guna gahana gambhīra*)⁵.

[⁴Even as it is absolutely impossible to get clarified butter by churning water instead of cream-rich milk, so it is also impossible to have any kind of comfort, peace, happiness, solace and succour by indulgence in the pleasures of the sense objects of the world, and trying to satisfy the sense organs by pursuing them. It would be like running after a desert mirage in search of water!

⁵To wit, whereas the gross world is full of vices and negative qualities that lead to fall of a creature and entrapment of his soul, the feet of Lord Ram, i.e. having devotion and affection for the Lord, is like a treasury of all the auspiciousness, righteousness, goodness, virtuousness and excellence of qualities. Verily, whereas the world would cause heart-burn and miseries, Lord Ram would grant abiding peace, tranquillity, happiness and solace like applying a soothing balm over a scorched body. So the 'mind' would be wise to stop pursuing the world and focus its attention on Lord Ram instead.] (2).

Thus oh Mind, become wise, stabilise yourself, and concentrate and listen carefully to what is said (*saba hī kō ēka mata sunu, matidhīra*) by the scriptures, the Vedas, the sages, the hermits, the ascetics, the Gods and the saints have proclaimed in this respect (*āgama nigama grantha, riṣi-muni, sura-santa*)⁶.

Oh Tulsidas! Though the banks of the river Ganges may be nearby (*jadyapi hai nikaṭa surasari-tīra*), the domestic animals (the cattle) would die of thirst if their caretaker is not near them (*tulasidāsa prabhu binu piyāsa marai pasu*)⁷.

[⁶And what is this dictum; what is that all of them say in an unequivocal term as to be an established principle? It is that 'one should abandon all other hopes of finding peace and happiness, solace and succour, liberation and deliverance, freedom from worldly miseries and pains et al that are associated with life in this transmigratory world, and instead turn to Lord Ram and seek shelter and refuge in the holy feet of the Lord which would ensure all these things and much more that a creature does not even ask for. He would be fortunate to feel exceedingly blissful, blessed and empowered with spirituality.'

⁷If the cattle are unattended and far away from their caretaker, there will be no one to untie them and escort them from their sheds to the river bank to allow the cattle to drink water. So these poor creatures would die of thirst inspite of living so close to the river. In this analogy, Tulsidas says that salvation, emancipation and supreme bliss may be accessible instantly, but it is not possible without having devotion, faith, affection and a sense of total surrender to Lord Ram. This is the 'key'—without the blessing and patronage of the Lord, no spiritual good can be expected by the creature, and neither would he be able to free himself from all the troubles and tribulations that are so characteristic of this mundane world of transmigration.] (3).

Having devotion/affection towards Lord Śrī Rāma's Holy Feet

(Parable of the Deer, the Parrot)

नाहिन चरन—रति, ताहि तें सहौं बिपति,
 कहत श्रुति सकल मुनि मतिधीर।
 बसै जो ससि—उछंग सुधा—स्वादित कुरंग,
 ताहि क्यों भ्रम निरखि रबिकर—नीर॥1॥
 सुनिय नाना पुरान, मिटत नाहिं अग्यान,
 पढ़िय न समुझिय जिमि खग कीर।
 बँधत बिनहिं पास सेमर—सुमन—आस
 करत चरत तेइ फल बिनु हीर॥2॥
 कछु न साधन—सिधि, जानौं न निगम—बिधि,
 नहिं जप—तप, बस मन, न समीर।
 तुलसिदास भरोस परम करुना—कोस,
 प्रभु हरिहैं बिषम भवभीर॥3॥

(197)

nāhinna carana-rati, tāhi tēm sahaum bipati,
 kahata śruti sakala muni matidhīra.
 basai jō sasi-uchaṅga sudhā-svādita kuraṅga,
 tāhi kyōm bhrama nirakhi rabikara-nīra. 1.
 suniya nānā purāna, miṭata nāhiṁ agyāna,
 paḍhiya na samujhiya jimi khaga kīra.
 bamḍhata binahim pāsa sēmara-sumana-āsa
 karata carata tē'i phala binu hīra. 2.
 kachu na sādhana-sidhi, jānaum na nigama-bidhi,
 nahim japa-tapa, basa mana, na samīra.
 tulasidāsa bharōsa parama karunā-kōsa,
 prabhu harihairi biṣama bhavabhīra. 3.

Verse no. 197—[Addressing the miserable condition of an ordinary creature who has no devotion and affection for Lord Ram, Tulsidas regrets and laments on his behalf when he says—]

Since I do not have true devotion, affection and faith in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (nāhinna carana-rati), I am suffering from so many miseries, troubles and tribulations in this world (tāhi tēm sahaum bipati).

It is not merely what I say but this is the preaching and the principle laid down in the proclamations made by the Vedas as well as all by the wise sages and hermits (kahata śruti sakala muni matidhīra).

Verily, say why would a wise deer who is blissfully enjoying the sweetness of peace and contentedness that comes with sitting (and snoozing) calmly in the lap of the moon with its nectar-like soothing light showering upon it (basai jō sasi-uchaṅga sudhā-svādita kuraṅga) would ever be so stupid to bargain this peace and fulfilment by being misled (or enticed) by the illusionary water of the mirage and run beind it? (tāhi kyōm bhrama nirakhi rabikara-nīra)¹.

[¹The deer who has experienced the bliss and relaxation that comes by peacefully sitting under the moon's light and dozing in solitude, why would he be so

foolish to venture out in the hot summer sun onto a barren stretch of desert sand to first get thirsty and scorched, and then try to quench its thirst by running behind the illusion of the water seen due to a mirage formed on the surface of the hot sand? If he indeed does so, wouldn't this deer be called utterly stupid? Wouldn't it be solely responsible for its miseries and grief?

Likewise, if a creature runs behind the deluding world in search of happiness and peace instead of focusing his attention on Lord Ram, he is equally stupid like this deer.] (1).

Even as a bird (the parrot) hears and learns by rote so many words and syllables but understands nothing (*paḍhiya na samujhiya jimi khaga kīra*), so are ignorance and stupidity of a creature not removed by merely hearing the various Purans and other ancient scriptures without understanding their real meaning and actual essence (*suniya nānā purāna, miṭata nāhiṃ agyāna*).

The stupid and ignorant parrot gets trapped in the snare of the bird-catcher on its own volition, even without coaxing (*bamḍhata binahiṃ pāsa*)². It is so foolish that it expects flowers from a cotton plant, but as soon as it pricks it with its beak it finds a pulp-less fruit (*sēmara-sumana-āsa karata carata tē'i phala binu hīra*)³.

[²The parrot is easily caught and caged. The bird-catcher makes it learn a few words and feeds it with some fruits and bits that the bird likes to eat. This stupid bird thinks that the bird-catcher is his friend and it never wishes to escape from the cage as it gets its food ready at hand without having to go scout for it. This caged parrot never realises that it is 'caged' and not free like other birds. So it merrily keeps singing and dancing in the limited space of the cage.

Likewise, a foolish creature does not realise that this world and all its relations have trapped him for their own enjoyment and service like the bird-catcher has caught and trapped the parrot for his own purpose. So, like the parrot, the dumb-witted creature feels he is happy in this world, without realising that he is trapped and bonded for life. He is so deluded that he never even thinks for freeing himself from this bondage like the parrot who sings and dances in the cage without understanding that its freedom has been snatched from it.

The cotton plant has attractive, red coloured flowers, and fruits appear at its stalk. The fruits have the fluffy white cotton instead of the sweet pulp usually found in fruits. The parrot goes to a flowering cotton plant in search of sweet fruits. It bites and pricks a number of such fruits on a single plant, but each time it finds dry cotton. It is so stupid that it never learns from its repeated attempts that such flowers and fruits won't yield any eating material to it, and so it goes on hopping from branch to branch, and from tree to tree in frustration, getting tired and agitated due to its own folly.] (2).

I don't have access to any Sadhans or Siddhis (means and expertise by which I can attain my objective in life) (*kachu na sādhana-sidhi*); I don't know anything about the many rituals mentioned in the Vedas (*jānaurṃ na nigama-bidhi*), nor do I know how to do penances, austerities, various sacrifices, meditation, repetition of mantras etc. (*nahiṃ japa-tapa*); I have never been able to control my mind by the Yogic system of 'Pranayam' (literally, by practicing to control my breath and body as a means of self-control over my sense organs and harnessing their energy for my spiritual upliftment) (*basa mana, na samīra*).

In the absence of any other resources, this humble Tulsidas has only one single hope: and it is that Lord Sri Ram, who is a treasury of mercy, kindness, compassion, grace and benevolence (*tulasidāsa bharōsa parama karunā-kōsa*), will take care of

all of Tulsidas' needs, spiritual as well as temporal, by eliminating his gravest of miseries and the worst of tribulations that are associated with this world and the cycle of birth and death (prabhu harihairṁ biṣama bhavabhīra) (3).

The Golden Opportunity which shouldn't be missed

Rāga Bhairavī

(198)

मन पछितैहै अवसर बीते ।
 दुरलभ देह पाइ हरिपद भजु, करम, बचन अरु ही ते ॥1॥
 सहसबाहु, दसबदन आदि नृप बचे न काल बलीते ।
 हम-हम करि धन-धाम सँवारे, अंत चले उठि रीते ॥2॥
 सुत-बनितादि जानि स्वास्थरत, न करु नेह सबही ते ।
 अंतहुँ तोहिं तजैंगे पामर! तू न तजै अबही ते ॥3॥
 अब नाथहिं अनुरागु, जागु जड़, त्यागु दुरासा जी ते ।
 बुझै काम अग्नि तुलसी कहूँ, बिषय-भोग बहु घी ते ॥4॥

(198)

mana pachitaihai avasara bītē.
 duralabha dēha pā'i haripada bhaju, karama, bacana aru hī tē. 1.
 sahasabāhu, dasabadana ādi nṛpa bacē na kāla balītē.
 hama-hama kari dhana-dhāma samvārē, anta calē uṭhi rītē. 2.
 suta-banitādi jāni svāratharata, na karu nēha sabahī tē.
 antahum' tōhim tajaiṅgē pāmara! tū na tajai abahī tē. 3.
 aba nāthahim anurāgu, jāgu jaṛa, tyāgu durāsā jī tē.
 bujhai kāma agini tulasī kahum', biṣaya-bhōga bahu ghī tē. 4.

Verse no. 198—Oh my Mana (mind and heart)! You will have to regret and lament a lot if and when this opportunity passes away (i.e. when you miss the chance of obtaining salvation and emancipation even after acquiring the human body). (mana pachitaihai avasara bītē.)¹

Hence, having received this rare human body (duralabha dēha pā'i), you should worship, revere and have true and full devotion for the lotus-like holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram) (haripada bhaju) with your heart in it, with all sincerity and honesty in whatever you do and whatever you speak (karama, bacana aru hī tē.)².

[¹To wit, you have got this human birth after countless births in different forms in the hierarchy of creation. All the good that you had done in all these lives got accumulated and you were rewarded with a human body in your current birth. It is a rare opportunity for you to get freedom from this cycle of birth and death, because you can do many positive and meritorious things with this human body that are not possible in any other form that a living being acquires in this creation. So, be wise and do not fritter away this chance under delusions of any kind, for if you do miss this

golden opportunity then be sure you will have to regret and lament for generations for your stupidity and ignorance.

²This fact is endorsed in Tulsidas' epic book 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45.] (1).

Even the most valiant, strong and invincible kings such as Shahastrabahu and Ravana etc. could not escape the jaws of Kaal (death), for they too had to die (*sahasabāhu, dasabadana ādi nṛpa bacē na kāla balītē*).

All those who had been miserly hoarding and taking great care of material their wealth and prosperous household which they had accumulated with great diligence and effort over a long period of time in their lives, all the while crying 'all this is mine; I possess it; it is me who has created this wealth; it's mine and no one else's; I would not part with it' (*hama-hama kari dhana-dhāma samvārē*)—well, all such persons had to forgo every bit of it and leave everything behind as they have to go from here empty-handed at the time of death (and not a single farthing could be taken along with them from this world to the next world) (*anta calē uṭhi rītē*) (2).

Regard the son, the wife and all others as being selfish and driven by their self-interests (*suta-banitādi jāni svāratharata*). Beware: Don't be attached to them unnecessarily (*na karu nēha sabahī tē*).

Oh you foolish and mean wretch (*pāmara*)! All of them would certainly leave or abandon you in the end (*antahum' tōhim tajaingē*), say then why don't you leave them right now (*tū na tajai abahī tē*)³.

[³Why don't you shun attachments and infatuations with them when you know that one day all of them would leave you, or you would be forced to leave them? Why don't you instead have devotion, love and affection for the Lord who shall accompany you in your journey even beyond death, and will not betray you ever? Remember, the Lord is your true friend and companion in the journey of your soul through different births, while all other relationships that you think are yours are merely transitional interactions just like one meets so many strangers during a train journey only to forget about them once the destination station is reached.

Why don't you understand that when the time of death comes, you alone would leave this world, and all others whom you had been thinking as your very own would stay behind. This is the best of all scenerios; in most of the cases your so-called kith and kin would turn away from you if they find that you can't fulfil their needs and live up to their expectations from you.] (3).

Oh you stupid and dumb-witted fool (*jāra*)! Wake up now at least ('*jāgu*'—from the sleep of ignorance and delusions that has overwhelmed you and clouded your reasoning). Learn to be realistic by developing love and affection with someone who is your true friend and well-wisher, i.e. with Lord Ram (*aba nāthahim anurāgu*), and abandon all hopes from your heart of ever deriving pleasure and happiness from this mundane, illusionary, materialistic and selfish temporal world and its relationships (*tyāgu durāsā jī tē*).

Oh Tulsidas (wake up and try to understand that) even as a raging fire can never be doused (or calmed) by pouring more Ghee (oil) into it (*bujhai kāma agini tulasī kahum'; bahu ghī tē*) (i.e. it gets more intense and furious by the oil), these hopes and desires, which are also like a fire (*kāma agini*), go on escalating as more

and more objects and comforts and pleasures of this world are acquired (biṣaya-bhōga) (i.e. worldly desires never get satisfied; they can only be terminated by contentedness, detachment and renunciation)⁴.

[⁴Refer also to verse nos. 83, 102, 201, 202.] (4).

A Warning to the Mind: Wake-up; Don't be misled and fall into a trap

(199)

काहेको फिरत मूढ मन धायो ।
तजि हरि—चरन—सरोज सुधारस, रबिकर—जल लय लायो ॥1॥
त्रिजग देव नर असुर अपर जग जोनि सकल भ्रमि आयो ।
गृह, बनिता, सुत, बंधु भये बहु, मातु—पिता जिन्ह जायों ॥2॥
जाते निरय—निकाय निरंतर, सोइ इन्ह तोहि सिखायो ।
तुव हित होइ, कटै भव—बंधन, सो मगु तोहि न बतायो ॥3॥
अजहुँ बिषय कहँ जतन करत, जद्यपि बहुबिधि डहँकायो ।
पावक—काम भोग—घृत तें सठ, कैसे परत बुझायो ॥4॥
बिषयहीन दुख, मिले बिपति अति, सुख सपनेहुँ नहिं पायो ।
उभय प्रकार प्रेत—पावक ज्यों धन दुखप्रद श्रुति गायो ॥5॥
छिन—छिन छीन होत जीवन, दुरलभ तनु बृथा गँवायो ।
तुलसिदास हरि भजहि आस तजि, काल—उरग जग खायो ॥6॥

(199)

kāhēkō phirata mūr̥ḥa mana dhāyō.
taji hari-carana-sarōja sudhārasa, rabikara-jala laya lāyō. 1.
trijaga dēva nara asura apara jaga jōni sakala bhrami āyō.
gr̥ha, banitā, suta, bandhu bhayē bahu, mātu-pitā jinha jāyōm. 2.
jātē niraya-nikāya nirantara, sō'i inha tōhi sikhāyō.
tuva hita hō'i, kaṭai bhava-bandhana, sō magu tōhi na batāyō. 3.
ajahum̐ biṣaya kham̐ jatana karata, jadyapi bahubidhi ḍaham̐kāyō.
pāvaka-kāma bhōga-ghr̥ta tēm saṭha, kaisē parata bujhāyō. 4.
biṣayahīna dukha, milē bipati ati, sukha sapanēhum̐ nahim̐ pāyō.
ubhaya prakāra prēta-pāvaka jyōm dhana dukhaprada śruti gāyō. 5.
china-china chīna hōta jīvana, duralabha tanu br̥thā gam̐vāyō.
tulasidāsa hari bhajahi āsa taji, kāla-uraga jaga khāyō. 6.

Verse no. 199—[This verse gives a wise advice to the creature's Mind to wake up even at this late stage, for redemption can still be had by taking shelter with Lord Ram and having devotion for the Lord. In this context, refer also to other similar verses of this book Vinai Patrika, e.g. Verse nos. 84-85, 87-90, 124, 126, 143, 196.]

Oh you stupid Mana (mind; “mūrha mana”)! Why do you wander like a vagrant and run aimlessly here and there (kāhēkō phirata dhāyō)¹?

Why do you abandon the nectar that is found in the holy lotus-like feet of Sri Hari (Ram) (taji hari-carana-sarōja sudhārasa) and run after the illusionary pleasures and comforts of this mundane gross material world of sense objects which is like seeking water in the mirage formed by the hot rays of the sun on the surface of a desert (rabikara-jala laya lāyō)²?

[¹Refer also to verse no. 196, stanza no. 1 of this book Vinai Patrika.

²Just like it is not possible for anyone to quench his thirst by drinking water seen in a desert mirage, likewise it is absolutely impossible to find true and abiding happiness, joy, peace, comfort and bliss by pursuing the world.

In the same vein, just like one is fully satisfied if one is able to drink a sweet source of life-giving water that is as nourishing and as refreshing like the fresh nectar dripping from a lotus flower, one would get an eternal and a sublime source of peace, happiness, joy, bliss and comfort by seeking such source in the holy feet of Lord Ram by having devotion, love and faith for the Lord. Nothing can, and would ever, match this divine nectar of the feeling of holiness, of blessedness and of beatitude that is available at the feet of Lord Ram.

Here, the ‘mirage’ refers to the countless attractions and temptations of the mundane, gross world that are all deluding, all illusive and elusive by their inherent nature. Nothing worthwhile and sustainable is achieved by pursuing the world as whatever comfort and happiness one gets in this world are all transient and superficial. The real and true and abiding comfort, peace, happiness and joy comes when one turns one’s mind to Lord Ram by inculcating the virtues of devotion and affection for the Lord, for quality of peace, happiness and bliss obtained through this method are of a sublime quality. It is like having access to nectar that is life-giving, rejuvenating and invigorating for the soul, a drink that makes the creature feel blessed and fulfilled, whereas running behind the sensual pleasures of the world and trying to find happiness and comfort in it is like seeking the water of a mirage to quench one’s thirst.

Tulsidas advises his “Mana” or the mind. He admonishes it by saying: Oh Mind; why are you so foolish as to discard the fountain of spiritual bliss and happiness that is found at the holy feet of Lord Ram, and instead run behind the elusive and illusionary sources of happiness and joy that you see in this world? Be warned that the things of this material world are all deludingly attractive as they are all inconsistent, transient and perishable by nature; you can never expect them to give you any amount of real happiness and joy. Rather, they will suck you in a vortex of constant misery and grief as soon as they manage to have a grip on you. After all, the main objective of yours is to seek happiness and comfort when you pursue this material world of sense objects, but why don’t you realise that it is both illusive and elusive—the more you run behind them the further away they would go from your reach like the water seen in a desert mirage.

Instead of frittering away your vital energy and wasting away the limited time that you have in this life in pursuing delusions of the world, why don’t you pursue something that is real and true, something that would give you abiding peace and happiness by approaching Lord Ram and seeking an eternal source of bliss, happiness

and peace that is available in abundance by having devotion for the Lord and seeking solace in his divine and holy feet? Well, you'll be well advised to do so.] (1).

You (i.e. the “Mana” representing the creature, the living being) have already spent your time wandering in different wombs (i.e. taking different births in different forms during the course of your journey through the cycle of transmigration—“ *jaga jōni sakala bhrami āyō*”) such as those of animals, birds, gods, humans, demons and numerous other forms in this creation (*trijaga dēva nara asura apara*).

Everywhere and each of your births you had parents who gave you birth (*mātu-pitā jinha jāyōm*). Each time you had so many kith and kin, and you had been in so many households where you had come across so many relationships like that of a brother, a wife, a son, and so on (*gr̥ha, banitā, suta, bandhu bhayē bahu*) (2).

All of them have invariably taught you (*sō'i inha tōhi sikhāyō*) to have interest in and develop attraction for only those subjects or things that would only lead you to another hell (*jātē niraya-nikāya nirantera*). All those with whom you came in contact and sought guidance from only told you about (*sō'i inha tōhi sikhāyō*) those subjects or things that related to this world and how to best use them to suit your own purpose as well as those of theirs (*jātē niraya-nikāya nirantera*)³.

[³But this so-called ‘your own interest’ was only superficial and illusionary in nature because in fact any involvement and attachment with the gross material world of sense objects only increased or aggravated your miseries, agitations and troubles instead of ameliorating or solving them. Whatever peace you may have had was also snatched from you. But you were so stupid and deluded as well as so dazzled by the stunning temptations of the sense objects of the world that you could not even realise that you were sliding deeper and deeper into a pit of darkness where only misery and tribulation would be your stock-in-trade.]

Verily indeed, it is so unfortunate that they never taught you something that would be truly in your self interest and for your real welfare (*tuva hita hō'i, sō magu tōhi na batāyō*). None ever told about and guided you towards that path by walking on which you could break the fetters that tie and pillory you to this mundane, temporal world, by which you could get rid of this cycle of birth and death, attain emancipation for your soul, and achieve salvation and eternal bliss (*kaṭai bhava-bandhana*). No one bothered about it; no one told you anything that would truly be in your interest and would serve your welfare (*sō magu tōhi na batāyō; tuva hita hō'i*)⁴.

[⁴All those you met during the long journey through countless births in this world only motivated you to re-enter the vicious cycle of birth and death by advising you such things that only lead towards it, that would tempt you towards the illusionary charms of the material world rather than away from it. By believing them and trusting in them you have remained trapped in a vice-like grip of misery and grief from which you could not break free till now.]

Everyone appeared to be your well-wisher and friend even as they actually were your enemies as they invariably misled you into getting involved with the affairs of the gross material world and remain trapped in this cycle of birth and death with its attendant burden of miseries and tribulations of various kinds. See, no one ever taught you about ways to break free from the vicious cycle in which you were trapped since time immemorial.

Refer verse no. 200 herein below in this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ which says exactly the same thing.] (3).

The great irony of the matter is this: that though you have been cheated and tricked in the aforesaid manner numerous of times and in various of ways (*jadyapi bahubidhi ḍahamkāyō*), you still don't realise the fault-lines and the trap in which you fall inadvertently; you continue to make great efforts for those same pursuits that had been the cause of your remaining trapped in an endless cycle of birth and death and its inherent nature of causing misery and pain (*ajahum̐ biṣaya kham̐ jatana karata*)⁵.

[⁵Each time you suffer, each time you promise not to repeat your errors and follies again, but each time you repeat the same nuisance and same set of misdemeanours all over again. Say, how can you ever find eternal peace and freedom from your worldly sorrows in this situation?]

Alas, you are so wicked and stupid (*tēm saṭha*)! Just think—how can the fire of desires, passions, greed, avarice, yearnings, infatuations, attachments etc. (*pāvaka-kāma*) ever be doused (i.e. calmed down—“*kaisē parata bujhāyō*”) by pouring the oil of comforts, pleasures and joys of the sensual objects of the material world into it (*bhōga-ghṛta tēm*)?⁶

[⁶The fire will only increase in ferocity instead of subsiding. To wit, it is absurd to expect that such negativities such as desires, passions, greed, avarice, longings and attachments can ever be neutralised if one continues to think that the world and its objects are sources of happiness and joy, of comfort and peace.] (4).

When you could not achieve success in getting the objects of the material world that would satisfy your yearnings and wants, when you could not fulfil your wishes and acquire what you intended to, you felt miserable and depressed, your failure gave you a lot of grief and frustration (*biṣayahīna dukha*).

But the irony is that even if you managed to acquire what you intended to get, if you were successful to access what you had always wanted to possess, you were still miserable and unhappy (*milē bipati ati*); peace and contentedness still evaded you even in your dreams (as you yearned for more and more of everything you already had, and for things you still did not have but longed for) (*sukha sapanēhum̐ nahim̐ pāyō*)⁷.

[⁷Indeed, it is such a vicious cycle of wants and yearnings vis-à-vis the material things of this world that you suppose would give you happiness, joy, peace, comfort, pleasure and satisfaction that it leaves you filling unfulfilled and in wants either way—whether you are successful in reaching your objective of acquiring these things, or have failed to do so. The result was that you never found rest and happiness even in your dreams; you always felt restless and unfulfilled.]

This is the reason why the Vedas have described (*śruti gāyō*) these delusory objects of the illusionary, materialistic, mundane and transient world (or literally the ‘wealths’ of this world) as sorrowful, as the ones that create torments and miseries for you either way, whether you have them or fail to have them (*dhana dukhaprada*). Forsooth, both these situations are like a fire lit by ghosts and phantoms (*ubhaya prakāra prēta-pāvaka jyōm̐*)⁸.

[⁸In a haunted house, evil spirits light unprovoked and unexplained mysterious fires at random places. If one fire is doused, another springs up suddenly and inexplicably. Fire in itself is good as it gives light and warmth to the inhabitants of the house, but the fire lit by ghosts and phantoms are terrifying as they burn down

everything that is there in the house. A resident of such a house never finds rest and peace. Likewise, a person who is foolish enough to seek happiness, peace and pleasure in the sense objects of the world is in for a surprise, as he would never be able to get them in the world, for the objects of the world are like a double-edged sword—such a sword cuts on both the sides. Success in acquisition of the objects gives sorrows as it ignites, it stokes the desire for more of it, then there is the worry to protect what has been already acquired, as well as to fend off jealousy and greed from others. Failure to acquire also gives disappointment and frustration that cause profound amount of sorrows and grief.] (5).

Alas! Your life is decaying and going to waste by the passage of each moment (china-china chīna hōta jīvana); you have already wasted this rare human body (in futile worldly pursuits—“duralabha tanu br̥thā gamvāyō”).

Therefore, oh Tulsidas, one should abandon all hopes of ever deriving true happiness and comfort from the pursuit of this world, and instead worship Sri Hari (Lord Ram), have true devotion for the Lord and trust him for your welfare and well-being (tulasidāsa hari bhajahi āsa taji).

I caution you to beware! The death-like serpent is consistently eating away at this mundane, temporal world (and no one knows when it would set its teeth on you; so you are advised not to waste a single moment of your precious life any more, and divert yourself towards having devotion and veneration for the Lord, worship him and have affection for him if you want good of your own self) (kāla-uraga jaga khāyō)⁹.

[⁹This idea is further elaborated in the next verse no. 200 herein below.] (6).

Death dangles like a sword on the head of all living beings

(200)

ताँबे सो पीठि मनहुँ तन पायो ।
नीच, मीच जानत न सीस पर, ईस निपट बिसरायो ॥1॥
अवनि—रवनि, धन—धाम, सुहृद—सुत, को न इन्हहिं अपनायो?
काके भये, गये सँग काके, सब सनेह छल—छायो ॥2॥
जिन्ह भूपनि जग—जीति, बाँधि जम, अपनी बाँह बसायो ।
तेऊ काल कलेऊ कीन्हे, तू गिनती कब आयो ॥3॥
देखु बिचारि, सार का साँचो, कहा निगम निजु गायो ।
भजहिं न अजहुँ समुझि तुलसी तेहि, जेहि महेस मन लायो ॥4॥

(200)

tām̐bē sō pīṭhi manahum̐ tana pāyō.
nīca, mīca jānata na sīsa para, īsa nipaṭa bisarāyō. 1.
avani-ravani, dhana-dhāma, suhr̥da-suta, kō na inhahim̐ apanāyō?
kākē bhayē, gayē sam̐ga kākē, saba sanēha chala-chāyō. 2.
jinha bhūpani jaga-jīti, bām̐dhi jama, apanī bām̐ha basāyō.
tē'ū kāla kalē'ū kīnhē, tū ginatī kaba āyō. 3.
dēkhu bicāri, sāra kā sām̐cō, kahā nigama niju gāyō.

bhajahim na ajahum samujhi tulasī tēhi, jēhi mahēsa mana lāyō. 4.

Verse no. 200—Oh Creature! It appears that you (are proud that you) have got a body cast in copper (or, a body which is as valuable, strong, long-lasting and rust or disease free as a new vessel made of copper—“tām̐bē sō pīṭhi manahum̐ tana pāyō”)¹!

[¹You erroneously think that your body, which has a colour like that of ‘copper’, is strong, valuable, rust-free and long-lasting like any copper vessel. That is why you are indulging in enjoying sensual pleasures and pursuing objects of the world endlessly under the aforesaid false belief that like the copper vessel your body is also strong, disease free, valuable, and would last a long time for you. You do not realise that in fact the body is like an unripe mud pitcher or a bubble of water that are impermanent and as easily destructible. Both the mud pitcher that has not been properly baked and the bubble of water can break without notice though they look so nice from their exterior. Likewise, your body is also perishable and it would die anytime without as much as a warning to you.]

You have completely forgotten your own Lord (Sri Ram—“īsa nipaṭa bisarāyō”) (because you had become too proud of your own self).

Oh you wicked chap and an exceedingly foolish one (nīca)! You do not know that death is dangling like a sword (literally, dancing) on your head (mīca jānata na sīsa para)².

[²Refer: Verse no. 199, stanza no. 6 herein above.

Tulsidas means that a creature has wasted his life either in trying to please the world or trying to derive pleasure for himself from the world. He does not realise two basic things—(i) that the body is to die one day and all the comforts and pleasures would also end with the body while the creature’s ‘true self’, i.e. his Atma or his soul, will be left in the lurch as it would have to assume another birth for itself so that it can move ahead on its long journey of life till it has reached its destination; and (ii) that none of the relationships and partners whom the creature thought would be his companions throughout his journey of life would accompany him beyond death; he will have to move ahead all alone! Besides this, all those whom he had thought to be his true and real friends and well-wishers were all driven by their own agendas, and they like him and befriended him only as long as he was helpful to them in this direction. Should he prove himself of no use to any of his so-called close friend or kith and kin, they would start neglecting him and treating him with disgust and contempt; he would become a source of irritation for them instead of being welcomed by them.

In this situation, the only true friend and well-wisher of a creature is Lord Ram. Refer the last stanza no. 4 of this verse herein below. So, this being the case, why is the creature not being wise and making friends with Lord Ram instead of being misled into having so many false friends in this world?] (1).

Who has not acquired, is attached to and has a sense of belonging to his land, wife, wealth/property, house, friend and son in this world (avani-ravani, dhana-dhāma, suhr̥da-suta, kō na inhahim̐ apanāyō)?

But have these been ever loyal to anyone till now (kākē bhayē)? With whom have they gone forever in one’s long journey through so many births; who have they not abandoned at some time or the other; who has accompanied another at the time of death (no matter how dear he or she may have been) (gayē sam̐ga kākē)?

Verily indeed and without any gainsay in the least, it is a fact that all the relationships in this world are based only on selfishness, on the criterion of one being of some use to the other or serving the other's self-interest if one were to expect that the other person would have anything to do with them. Hence, all relationships of any kind whatsoever, such as friendship, comradeship, family and filial ties, business or any other sort of mutual relations are primarily driven by self-interest. So therefore, all expressions of being true to one's friend, love and kith and kin are basically pretensions and falsehood because in all these relationships and the sense of belongings one is always concerned about one's self-interest above any thing else (saba sanēha chala-chāyō)³.

[³Refer verse no. 199, stanza nos. 2-3 herein above in this Book 'Vinai Patrika' which says exactly the same thing.] (2)

Those rulers (conquerors; kings and emperors) who had conquered and subjugated the whole world (jinha bhūpani jaga-jīti), who were so powerful and strong that they had even made Yamraj (the God of death and hell) their captive and tied him up, making him obey their orders (bām̐dhi jama, apanī bām̐ha basāyō)—even they were not spared by Kaal (death, time and circumstance) and one day they became its fodder (i.e. one day they too had to die), then what do you count or where do you stand (tē'ū kāla kalē'ū kīnhē, tū ginatī kaba āyō)⁴?

[⁴To wit, when 'death' did not spare even such invincible and mighty persons, how do you foolishly expect it to spare you or show mercy on you? In this context, refer to verse no. 199, stanza no. 6 herein above.] (3).

Contemplate and think about the whole matter seriously yourself (dēkhu bicāri)—what is the truth, what is the reality (sāra kā sām̐cō), and what the Vedas have positively asserted and proclaimed themselves (kahā nigama niju gāyō)?

Oh Tulsidas! Even after realising this, you still do not worship and have devotion for Lord Sri Ram (bhajahim̐ na ajahum̐ samujhi tulasī tēhi) in whom Lord Shiva has fixed (concentrated, focused) his attention and mind as well (jēhi mahēsa mana lāyō)⁵.

[⁵Lord Shiva is the wisest and the most enlightened of all the Gods. After due diligence and doing a lot of contemplation he had come to the conclusion that Lord Ram is the only true benefactor and a selfless true friend of all living beings; Lord Ram is the only Lord who takes full care of his devotees and goes out of his way to ensure that those who take refuge with him and say his holy name are invariably provided liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

In this context, refer also to verse no. 190, and verse no. 191, stanza nos. 1-2 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.] (4).

Utility of the Human Body

(201)

लाभ कहा मानुष-तनु पाये ।
काय-बचन-मन सपनेहुँ कबहुँक घटत न काज पराये ॥१॥
जो सुख सुरपुर-नरक, गेह-बन आवत बिनहिं बुलाये ।

तेहि सुख कहँ बहु जतन करत मन, समुझत नहिँ समुझाये ॥2॥
 पर-दारा, पर-द्रोह, मोहबस किये मूढ़ मन भाये ।
 गरभबास दुखरासि जातना तीव्र बिपति बिसराये ॥3॥
 भय-निद्रा, मैथुन-अहार, सबके समान जग जाये ।
 सुर-दुरलभ तनु धरि न भजे हरि मद अभिमान गवाँये ॥4॥
 गई न निज-पर-बुद्धि, सुद्ध है रहे न राम-लय लाये ।
 तुलसिदास यह अवसर बीते का पुनि के पछिताये ॥5॥

(201)

lābha kahā mānuṣa-tanu pāyē.
 kāya-bacana-mana sapanēhum̐ kabahum̐ka ghaṭata na kāja parāyē. 1.
 jō sukha surapura-naraka, gēha-bana āvata binahim̐ bulāyē.
 tēhi sukha kham̐ bahu jatana karata mana, samujhata nahim̐ samujhāyē. 2.
 para-dārā, para-drōha, mōhabasa kiyē mūr̐ha mana bhāyē.
 garabhabāsa dukharāsi jātana tībra bipati bisarāyē. 3.
 bhaya-nidrā, maithuna-ahāra, sabakē samāna jaga jāyē.
 sura-duralabha tanu dhari na bhajē hari mada abhimāna gavām̐yē. 4.
 ga'ī na nija-para-bud'dhi, sud'dha hvai rahē na rāma-laya lāyē.
 tulasidāsa yaha avasara bītē kā puni kē pachitāyē. 5.

Verse no. 201—[This verse stresses on the need of being selfless in one's service to others.]

What is the use of getting (or keeping) the human body (lābha kahā mānuṣa-tanu pāyē) if it is not of any good to others even in one's dreams (sapanēhum̐ kabahum̐ka ghaṭata na kāja parāyē), if the body has never been used to help others in their hour of need by using its resources, such as the mind, wisdom, speech and deeds to the best (kāya-bacana-mana)¹.

[¹To wit, one should be of help to others in their hour of need by using one's mind, wisdom, speech and body as the occasion may arise and demand.

Refer also to verse 203, stanza no. 8 in this context.] (1).

The basic pleasures and comforts that destiny has destined for you, those to which you were entitled (by the virtue of your past good deeds and their accumulated rewards), come to you on their own so that your primary needs are met (jō sukha --- āvata binahim̐ bulāyē). This happens wherever you may be—in the heaven, in the hell, in this world or inside your home (surapura-naraka, gēha-bana).

Oh my Mana (mind)! This being the case, what is the use and the sense of wasting your precious time and energy pursuing the world for these same things (that would come to you nevertheless) (tēhi sukha kham̐ bahu jatana karata mana)?

Aren't you so stupid that you don't understand this fundamental thing inspite of telling you about it repeatedly (samujhata nahim̐ samujhāyē)?

[Oh mind, you adopt many crafty efforts for those pleasures, and inspite of my trying to teach you, explain and advise you, you still do not understand how stupid you are!]².

[²Tulsidas tells his mind to be wise. The mind must understand where its good and welfare lies.

Every person gets the fruit of his deeds. If he has done good deeds then surely and certainly rewards in the form of happiness, joy, peace, pleasures and comforts related to life in this world would come to that person. So what is the need and the sense in wasting effort and energy in trying to fetch them? Verily, would it not make sense to utilise the same time and effort for doing something better and more valuable so that every step taken in life would gradually lift the person higher and higher in stature and achievements. The best effort is done that is 'selfless' in manner, and one that frees the 'self', the Atma, from the bondage of the gross body and sets it free.

Why can't a person who can serve others serve himself also; why would he not worry about the good of his own self if he says he is trying to be good to others? The idea here is that one should be honest to one's own self rather than pretending to be honest with others in the world, for if one is not true to one's own self then he can't be true to others. Say who is so foolish to burn his own home to protect the houses of others to whom he is not even related? Similarly, who would not first look after the interest of his own self, which in this case is freedom from worldly miseries and attaining eternal peace and happiness, instead of worrying about teaching others about their virtues and methods to attain them? (2).

Oh my Mana, you have become such a foolish fellow (*mūrḥa mana bhāyē*)! Driven by ignorance and stupidity, you became very deluded, perverse and wayward (*mōhabasa kiyē*).

Why, you have been so vagrant in character, so arrogant, unreasonable and lustful in your attitude that you did not restrain your self from having passions and longings towards other people's women (*para-dārā*).

You had behaved recklessly, egoistically, arrogantly and most irrationally which led to your creating animosity, malice, discord, jealousy and ill-will all around you (*para-drōha*).

You had all but forgotten the great miseries and torments you had suffered while you were in the mother's womb (*garabhabāsa dukharāsi jātanā tībra bipati bisarāyē*). [You did not realise that all these evil deeds of yours would push you back to another bout of immense sufferings in the womb because instead of emancipation and salvation of your soul, it would be shoved back in the vicious cycle of death and birth.]³.

[³Refer to verse no. 136 of this book Vinai Patrika in this context.] (3).

All the animate creatures (those who take birth as living beings in this world) have uniformity in one aspect—all of them have some kind of fear, they sleep, have sex and hunger (for food), no one is an exception (*bhaya-nidrā, maithuna-ahāra, sabakē samāna jaga jāyē*).

But you had not worshipped, revered, adored and have devotion for the Lord Hari (Ram) (*na bhajē hari*) even after being fortunate enough to have got a human body which is regarded as being the rarest of all forms that the countless creatures get, and which is said to be even rare for Gods to have (*sura-duralabha tanu dhari*).

You have instead wasted it (the human body) in vain, in worthless pursuits, in arrogance, pride, ego, haughtiness, hypocrisy etc. (*mada abhimāna gavāmṣyē*) (4).

Those who could not destroy the distinction between ‘me/my/mine’ and ‘you/yours’ (i.e. who are not impartial, dispassionate, detached, who do not have the virtues of equanimity and equality—“gaī na nija-para-bud'dhī”), and those who did not concentrate, focus and merge their thoughts, mind and intellect (i.e. their entire being) in Lord Sri Ram with a heart that is pure, devoted and full of faith and conviction (sud'dha hvai rahē na rāma-laya lāyē)—then, Tulsidas says, what will they get by lamenting and regretting later on after having lost and forfeited such a golden chance, a rare opportunity of having got a human body (tulasidāsa yaha avasara bītē kā puni kē pachitāyē).

[Hence, you should wake up and start involving yourself in having devotion for Lord Ram, in worshipping and revering the Lord, and in having faith in him even at this late stage but before it is too late.]⁴

[⁴Refer also to verse no. 198 herein above.] (5).

The World is like a huge Tree or an Ocean

(202)

काजु कहा नरतनु धरि साख्यो ।
 पर-उपकार सार श्रुतिको जो, सो धोखेहु न बिचाख्यो ॥1॥
 द्वैत मूल, भय-सूल, सोक-फल, भवतरु तरै न टाख्यौ ।
 रामभजन-तीछन कुठार लै सो नहिं काटि निवाख्यो ॥2॥
 संसय-सिंधु नाम-बोहित भजि निज आत्मा न ताख्यो ।
 जनम अनेक विवेकहीन बहु जोनि भ्रमत नहिं हाख्यो ॥3॥
 देखि आनकी सहज संपदा द्वेष-अनल मन-जाख्यो ।
 सम, दम, दया दीन-पालन, सीतल हिय हरि न सँभाख्यो ॥4॥
 प्रभु गुरु पिता सखा रघुपति तैं मन क्रम बचन बिसाख्यो ।
 तुलसिदास यहि आस, सरन राखिही जेहि गीध उधाख्यो ॥5॥

(202)

kāju kahā naratanu dhari sārāiō.
 para-upakāra sāra śrutikō jō, sō dhōkhēhu na bicāraiō. 1.
 dvaita mūla, bhaya-sūla, sōka-phala, bhavataru ṭarai na ṭāraiāu.
 rāmabhajana-tīchana kuṭhāra lai sō nahim kāṭi nivāraiō. 2.
 sansaya-sindhu nāma-bōhita bhaji nija ātamā na tāraiō.
 janama anēka vivēkahīna bahu jōni bhramata nahim hāraiō. 3.
 dēkhi ānakī sahaja sampadā dvēṣa-anala mana-jāraiō.
 sama, dama, dayā dīna-pālana, sītala hiya hari na sambhāraiō. 4.
 prabhu guru pitā sakhā raghupati taim mana krama bacana bisāraiō.
 tulasidāsa yahi āsa, sarana rākhihī jēhi gīdha udhāraiō. 5.

Verse no. 202—[This verse continues to expend upon the ideas expressed in the previous verse no. 201, especially stanza nos. 1 and 5. Besides this idea, another

important point to note is that the analogy of a Tree and an Ocean has been used to describe this gross mundane world in stanza nos. 2-3.]

What great success, renown, glory and fame have you acquired or what have you achieved by way of valuable gains and doing of meritorious deeds that go to your credit, enhance your stature and ensure your true welfare and good though you were fortunate enough to be blessed with a human body that is regarded as rarest of rare forms that any creature can have (*kāju kahā naratanu dhari sārāiō*)¹?

Those deeds and activities that are regarded as good and meritorious, such as being beneficent, benevolent, kind, merciful, charitable, noble and virtuous to others, thinking well of others and providing succour and help to the needy—activities that are treated by the Vedas as essential elements of Dharma (i.e. the right and auspicious path to attaining liberation and deliverance from the bondage of the cycle of transmigration) (*para-upakāra sāra śrutikō jō*)—you have not done any of them even unwillingly or inadvertently (i.e. there is not a single noble deed to your credit, and even in your dreams you never thought of doing one good thing in your life) (*sō dhōkhēhu na bicāraiō*).

[¹To wit, what great things, deeds or activities have you done utilising this precious gift of the human body which you can be proud of, or which you profer as an instance of your wise thoughts and intelligent being, and their proper utilisation? The reality is that you have wasted it.

The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly has been repeatedly stressed in Vinai Patrika at a number of places. Some of the instances are verse nos. 83-84, 102, 130, 135/1, 151, 194, 198-201 etc.] (1).

This gross world is like a huge ‘Tree’ (*bhavataru*)—its *root* consists of Dvaita [duality; the sense of ‘this’ and ‘that’, ‘true’ and ‘false’, the ‘formed’ and ‘formless’ aspects of God; by extension, the sense of ‘my’ and ‘your’, to differentiate between two aspects or to imagine that there are two aspects of the same thing, which, as a consequence results in strifes, debates, discords, perplexities, confusions, bewilderments and agitations—“*dvaita mūla*”], and this ‘tree’ has *thorns* in the shape of fears, phobias, hates etc. (*bhaya-sūla*), and the *fruits* are in the form of sorrows, miseries and tribulations of various kinds (*sōka-phala*).

This ‘Tree’ obstructs your path and it does not get out of the way inspite of making strenuous efforts (“*ṭarai na ṭāraiō*”—because unless its roots are cut, it is practically impossible to remove any tree permanently).

It is only possible to cut it (i.e. this obstruction in your path that hinders your spiritual progress and attainment of eternal peace, happiness by getting liberation and deliverance from the cycle of miseries and tribulations associated with the cycle of transmigration) by a sharp axe in the form of worship and devotion for Lord Sri Ram (*rāmabhajana-tīchana kuṭhāra lai*), but you did not attempt to do it (*sō nahim kāṭi nivāraiō*)².

[²Briefly, the gross world of material objects with all its temptations and charms, with its compulsions and obligations of existence, the necessities of life and the desire on the part of the creature to have comfort and pleasure and make the best out of this chance after it had been suffering long through the arduous journey in different births and different bodies, makes the person so deluded that he does not realise that the opportunity to have a human body and live in this wonderful world of so many pleasures and comforts is not a reward given to him but it is a formidable

obstacle in the way to his final liberation and deliverance. It is a last chance to break free from the endless cycle of birth and death, but the delusions are so great and unshakable that the person falls in the trap.

In this verse, such a deluded and misled person is being warned and alerted. He is advised that this tree-like world is horrifying to the extreme. All its fruits are bitter and sour; its root is strong and deep. Getting too close to this ‘tree’ would cause wounds from its sharp thorns. The path to liberation and deliverance, and to attain eternal peace and happiness is narrow, and it is obstructed by this formidably huge ‘tree’. So the only way to move ahead is to cut this tree. Ordinary methods that one would usually use to cut a tree have all failed—metaphorically such methods are the myriads of ways prescribed by the scriptures for one to overcome his spiritual obstacles and attain his objective. Some of these methods are doing Tapa, Yoga, Japa, Dhyān, Smadhi, Vairāgya, Daan, Shama, Dama, etc.

The only effective method by which a person can easily remove this obstacle symbolised by this huge tree-like gross world of material objects, with its so branches, fruits, flowers and thorns symbolising the many temptations and delusions and their accompanying miseries and tribulations, is to have devotion, affection and faith in Lord Ram. There is no other way.] (2).

For crossing this huge ‘Ocean’ representing ignorance, bewilderments, confusions, doubts and futile debates (*sansaya-sindhu*), the holy name of Lord Sri Ram is like a ship (*nāma-bōhita*), but you did not use it to worship and pay your obeisance to the Lord to help let your soul, your Atma, to cross this vast ocean (*bhaji nija ātamā na tāraîō*)³.

You have not become tired of roaming aimlessly and ignorantly in numerous births and countless wombs (*janama anēka vivēkahīna bahu jōni bhramata nahim hāraîō*)⁴.

[³Refer verse no. 197, stanza no. 3 also in this context.

⁴Refer also to verse no. 135/1 and verse no. 199, stanza no. 4 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ in this context.] (3).

Your mind had a natural tendency to burn out of jealousy and envy at the wealth and achievements of others (*dēkhi ānakī sahaja sampadā dvēṣa-anala mana-jāraîō*)⁵.

You hadn't practiced any of the good virtues of life—such as the grand virtues of equanimity, dispassion, equitability and tolerance, by having forbearance, mercy, compassion and charitable disposition, and by providing sustenance and succour to those who were in wants, those who were distressed, lowly, humble, meek, deprived and downtrodden (*sama, dama, dayā dīna-pālana -- na*)⁶.

You had never calmed down your perpetually agitated heart; you had never took care to concentrate it on Lord Hari (Sri Ram); and your vagrant mind had never bothered to remember the Lord with affection and devotion (*sītala hiya hari na sambhāraîō*)⁷.

[⁵You always were envious of what belonged rightly to others. You had always eyed it and thought to your self “Oh, why is that man having this or that thing; why I can't have it”. You weren't contented with what was rightfully yours and given to you in accordance to your share or entitlement based on what you did earlier. You said, “Oh, why is his wealth not ruined or, when will the day come when he becomes a beggar.”

⁶In other words, you had never been of any help to others in a selfless way. If you did help others it was only done to serve your own interests. Refer stanza no. 1 in this context.

⁷Refer also to verse no. 200, stanza no. 1, and verse no. 202, stanza no. 5 herein above of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' which also reiterate the same thing.] (4)

It is such an irony that you have totally—i.e. by your mind (thoughts, memory, sub-conscious), by your deeds and actions, and by your speech (*tairṁ mana krama bacana bisāraîō*)—forgotten (and neglected) Sri Raghupati (Sri Ram) who is your true Lord, true teacher, true father and true friend (*prabhu guru pitā sakhā raghupati*). [And instead of Lord Ram, you had been treating all the worldly relations as your dear ones and true well-wisher.]⁸

Oh Tulsidas! The only hope now is that the Lord who had been so merciful and gracious that he even liberated and had provided salvation to the vulture Jatau, will also give you shelter in his divine feet as one of his refugees and protectees (i.e. as one of his devotees who has come to seek refuge with the Lord, and to whom the Lord is duty-bound to extend unquestioned protection) (*tulasidāsa yahi āsa, sarana rākhihī jēhi gīdha udhārāîō*)⁹.

[⁸Refer: Verse no. 199, stanza nos. 2-3; and verse no. 200, stanza no. 2 also.]

⁹Refer: Verse no. 187, stanza no. 5; and verse no. 197, stanza no. 3 also in this context.] (5).

The Analogy of the 15-day waxing phase of the Lunar Cycle

(known as the 'Śukla-Pakṣha')

(203)

श्रीहरि-गुरु-पद-कमल भजहु मन तजि अभिमान ।
 जेहि सेवत पाइय हरि सुख-निधान भगवान ॥1॥
 परिवा प्रथम प्रेम बिनु राम-मिलन अति दूरि ।
 जद्यपि निकट हृदय निज रहे सकल भरिपूरि ॥2॥
 दुइज द्वैत-मति छाड़ि चरहि महि-मंडल धीर ।
 बिगत मोह-माया-मद हृदय बसत रघुबीर ॥3॥
 तीज त्रिगुन-पर परम पुरुष श्रीरमन मुकुंद ।
 गुन सुभाव त्यागे बिनु दुरलभ परमानंद ॥4॥
 चौथि चारि परिहरहु बुद्धि-मन-चित-अहंकार ।
 बिमल बिचार परमपद निज सुख सहज उदार ॥5॥
 पाँचइ पाँच परस, रस, सब्द, गंध अरु रूप ।
 इन्ह कर कहा न कीजिये, बहुरि परब भव-कूप ॥6॥
 छठ पटबरग करिय जय जनकसुता-पति लागि ।
 रघुपति-कृपा-बारि बिनु नहिं बुताइ लोभागि ॥7॥
 सातैं सप्तधातु-निरमित तनु करिय बिचार ।
 तेहि तनु केर एक फल, कीजै पर-उपकार ॥8॥
 आठइँ आठ प्रकृति-पर निरबिकार श्रीराम ।
 केहि प्रकार पाइय हरि, हृदय बसहिं बहु काम ॥9॥

नवमी नवद्वार-पुर बसि जेहि न आपु भल कीन्ह ।
 ते नर जोनि अनेक भ्रमत दारुन दुख लीन्ह ॥10॥
 दसहूँ दसहु कर संजम जो न करिय जिय जानि ।
 साधन बृथा होइ सब मिलहिं न सारंगपानि ॥11॥
 एकादसी एक मन बस कै सेवहु जाइ ।
 सोइ ब्रत कर फल पावै आवागमन नसाइ ॥12॥
 द्वादसि दान देहु अस, अभय होइ त्रैलोक ।
 परहित-निरत सो पारन बहुरि न ब्यापत सोक ॥13॥
 तेरसि तीन अवस्था तजहु, भजहु भगवंत ।
 मन-क्रम-बचन-अगोचर, व्यापक, व्याप्य, अनंत ॥14॥
 चौदसि चौदह भुवन अचर-चर-रूप गोपाल ।
 भेद गये बिनु रघुपति अति न हरहिं जग-जाल ॥15॥
 पूनों प्रेम-भगति-रस हरि-रस जानहिं दास ।
 सम, सीतल, गत-मान, ग्यानरत, विषय-उदास ॥16॥
 त्रिबिध सूल होलिय जरै, खेलिय अब फागु ।
 जो जिय चहसि परमसुख तौ यहि मारग लागु ॥17॥
 श्रुति-पुरान-बुध-संमत चौचरि चरित मुरारि ।
 करि बिचार भव तरिय, परिय न कबहुँ जमधारि ॥18॥
 संसय-समन, दमन दुख, सुखनिधान हरि एक ।
 साधु-कृपा बिनु मिलहिं न, करिय उपाय अनेक ॥19॥
 भवसागर कहँ नाब सुद्ध संतनके चरन ।
 तुलसिदास प्रयास बिनु मिलहिं राम दुखहरन ॥20॥

(203)

śrīhari-guru-pada-kamala bhajahu mana taji abhimāna.
 jēhi sēvata pā'iya hari sukha-nidhāna bhagavāna. 1.
 parivā prathama prēma binu rāma-milana ati dūri.
 jadyapi nikāṭa hṛdaya nija rahē sakala bharipūri. 2.
 du'ija dvaita-mati chāḍi carahi mahi-maṇḍala dhīra.
 bigata mōha-māyā-mada hṛdaya basata raghubīra. 3.
 tija triguna-para parama puruṣa śrīramana mukunda.
 guna subhāva tyāgē binu duralabha paramānanda. 4.
 cauthi cāri pariharahu bud'dhi-mana-cita-ahamkāra.
 bimala bicāra paramapada nija sukha sahaja udāra. 5.
 pāmca'i pāmca parasa, rasa, sabda, gandha aru rūpa.
 inha kara kahā na kījiyē, bahuri paraba bhava-kūpa. 6.
 chaṭha ṣaṭabaraga kariya jaya janakasutā-pati lāgi.
 raghupati-kṛpā-bāri binu nahim butā'i lōbhāgi. 7.
 sātairi saptadhātu-niramita tanu kariya bicāra.
 tēhi tanu kēra ēka phala, kījai para-upakāra. 8.
 āṭha'im āṭha prakṛti-para nirabikāra śrīrāma.
 kēhi prakāra pā'iya hari, hṛdaya basahim bahu kāma. 9.
 navamī navadvāra-pura basi jēhi na āpu bhala kīnha.
 tē nara jōni anēka bhramata dārūna dukha līnha. 10.
 dasaim dasahu kara sanjama jō na kariya jiya jāni.

sādhana br̥thā hō'i saba milahiṁ na sāramṅapāni. 11.
 ēkādasī ēka mana basa kai sēvahu jā'i.
 sō'i brata kara phala pāvai āvāgamana nasā'i. 12.
 dvādasi dāna dēhu asa, abhaya hō'i trailōka.
 parahita-nirata sō pārana baturi na byāpata sōka. 13.
 tēraśi tīna avasthā tajahu, bhajahu bhagavanta.
 mana-krama-bacana-agōcara, vyāpaka, vyāpya, ananta. 14.
 caudasi caudaha bhuvana acara-cara-rūpa gōpāla.
 bhēda gayē binu raghupati ati na harahiṁ jaga-jāla. 15.
 pūnōm̐ prēma-bhagati-rasa hari-rasa jānahiṁ dāsa.
 sama, sītala, gata-māna, gyānarata, viṣaya-udāsa. 16.
 tribidha sūla hōliya jarai, khēliya aba phāgu.
 jō jiya cahasi paramasukha tau yahi māraga lāgu. 17.
 śruti-purāna-budha-sammata cām̐cari carita murāri.
 kari bicāra bhava tariya, pariya na kabahum̐ jamadhāri. 18.
 sansaya-samana, damana dukha, sukhanidhāna hari ēka.
 sādhu-kṛpā binu milahiṁ na, kariya upāya anēka. 19.
 bhavasāgara kaham̐ nāba sud'dha santanakē carana.
 tulasidāsa prayāsa binu milahiṁ rāma dukhaharana. 20.

Verse no. 203—[In this remarkable verse, Tulsidas has used each of the fifteen days of the waxing phase of the moon to describe the steps one must take to attain beatitude and felicity, to attain oneness with the Lord God and its accompanying sense of spiritual fulfilment that culminates in eternal bliss and peace.]

Oh my Mind (mana)! Abandoning your pride, ego, arrogance and haughtiness (**taji abhimāna**), you should worship, adore and have devotion for the august feet of your Guru (moral teacher and preceptor; one's spiritual guide and aid) who is like a personified form of the Lord God (Sri Ram) (**śrīhari-guru-pada-kamala bhajahu**).

By serving a true Guru you can easily and without hassles attain the supreme blissful state of oneness with Lord Hari (Sri Ram) (**jēhi sēvata pā'ya hari sukha-nidhāna bhagavāna**)¹.

[¹This is the primary step and like a stepping stone to achieve one's objective. Obviously one would need someone to guide him in his spiritual path. But one should be careful before selecting a Guru because if the selection is wrong then the guidance would also be wrong. A wrong Guru will be more harmful than not having a Guru at all.

This is the new moon's night because it is from this day that the light of the moon begins to increase day by day, symbolising that when one accepts an acclaimed and realised teacher his journey has kick-started on the right note and towards the right target. Under the aegis and guidance of a selfless, adroit, wise and enlightened teacher, a spiritual aspirant is assured of success in his endeavours, and all his problems, doubts and confusions would be correctly and properly addressed, and he feels happy that he is in the right hands that would be able to handle his progress and his future in the right way.] (1).

Like the day of 'Pratipada' (the first day of the lunar month—"parivā prathama"), the first way, the first mean and the essential one (to achieve the goal of attaining the blissful state of oneness with the Lord God) is to have true (honest and sincere; of

sublime, ethereal and spiritual kind of) love, affection and devotion for the Lord (prathama prēma).

It is very remote and a far-fetched idea that one would be able to reach Lord Sri Ram without having the virtues of love, affection and devotion in one's heart (prēma binu rāma-milana ati dūri), though it is also true that the Lord is very close to a creature as he lives or resides in the very heart of all living beings (jadyapi nikaṭa hrdaya nija rahē sakala bharipūri)².

[²One has not to search for the Lord God anywhere outside if one were wise enough to understand that the Lord resides in his own heart, and the first step that is like opening the door to the Lord's chamber is to have love, devotion and affection for him. Otherwise, all exercise is in vain; all efforts are futile.

Thus, the first essential step is to have sincere and deep love, affection and devotion for the Lord God; to adore, revere and worship the Lord with truthness of the heart and commitment of the mind.] (2).

Like the day of 'Dwitiya' (the second day of the lunar month—"du'ija"), the second way or path is to stabilise the mind and the heart (dhīra) by abandoning or discarding or overcoming the sense of Dwaita ("dvaita-mati chāḍi"—dichotomies; dual nature of God; distinction between God and creature, or God and soul; this and that; lack of uniformity of view; not seeing the one God everywhere).

Once having realised the universal presence of the Lord who is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness, and having no doubt about this statement, one would see uniformity in this whole creation, would begin to have an equanimity and stability of mind, a mind that is steady and unfaltering mind, a mind that is not fickle and vagrant as such a mind would be detrimental towards attaining success in any field or endeavour whatsoever it may be.

After having thus stabilised and controlled the mind, the spiritual aspirant should roam in the world fearlessly, practicing equanimity, evenness, equality, tolerance and forbearance (carahi mahi-maṇḍala dhīra).

For in all sooth, let it be known that Lord Raghubir (Sri Ram) lives only in those hearts (hrdaya basata raghubīra) that are free from 'Moha', 'Maya' and 'Ghamand' (attachments, infatuations, delusions, ignorance, confusions, doubts as well as ego, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy and pride) (bigata mōha-māyā-mada)³.

[³This is the second step: and it is to have a universal view of the uniform existence of the Lord God, who is pure Consciousness, everywhere in this creation, without exception. In other words, the spiritual aspirant must learn to see his beloved Lord everywhere around him. He must learn to treat all the creatures alike, and deal with them with a lot of compassion and love because since he is expected to 'see' his dear Lord 'everywhere', it also includes all living beings. There is no surprise in it—because the Lord 'lives in the heart of all living beings', so why should one distinguish between any two creatures?

Further, since Lord Ram lives in a clean environment, he would live in a heart that is clean and pure, and not in one that is dark, corrupted and tainted. To make the heart an abode of the Lord God it is essential to make it calm, pure and peaceful, to eliminate all those factors that cause it disturbances and agitations. Some of these causes come with having doubts and confusions arising out of dichotomies and uncertainties as to what is true and what is not, where the Lord lives and where he does not.

Confusions and doubts arising out of duality is like being in a boat on a choppy ocean; the boat swings and tosses and rocks so violently that its passenger is horrified beyond measure, so how can he ever find peace and happiness?

The immediate bonus that comes to the spiritual aspirant with this attitude of seeing universality in the presence of the Lord, by elimination of Dwaita, is that he is liked by all the creatures in this world since he begins to be friendly towards all living being; no one is his enemy any longer, and he is welcomed and treated with affection wherever he goes. This creates a positive environment for him and aides in his spiritual life as all discord and ill-will are eliminated, and the heart and the mind find peace and tranquillity for good.] (3).

The third step or the third requirement, like the day of the ‘Tritiya’ (the third lunar day—“tījā”), is that one should realise the fact that Sri Mukund (the Lord God), the radiance and brilliance of Laxmi, the Param Purush (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness; the universal and cosmic form of the Lord) is beyond the three Gunas (which represent the three basic attributes or qualities of creation, known as ‘Satvik’, ‘Rajsik’, and ‘Tamsik’) (*triguna-para parama puruṣa śrīramana mukunda*).

Since the spiritual aspirant has already been advised to practice uniformity and universality of the Lord, and to eliminate the sense of duality, he is also expected to eliminate seeing the Lord from the perspective of these three Gunas and distinguishing between the subtle forms of the Lord.

Hence, a wise aspirant should abandon the habit of trying to judge the Supreme Being with the same yardstick with which a foolish person sees and judges the rest of the world, because without eliminating this tendency to harp about the three Gunas and seeing the Lord from this distorted prism one cannot expect to experience supreme bliss and beatitude (*guna subhāva tyāgē binu duralabha paramānanda*)⁴.

[⁴There are three basic ‘Gunas’ or attributes or qualities that govern the personality and character of all living being. They are known as ‘Satvik’, ‘Rajsik’ and ‘Tamsik’. The first is the group of attributes that are the best and the most auspicious; the last is the worst sort, and the second lies somewhere in the middle of the two as it is a transition zone between the two extremes. These three Gunas are briefly described in a note no. 13 appended to verse no. 57 of this book Vinai Patrika.

Now, since the Supreme Being is a personified form of ‘pure cosmic Consciousness’ it follows that he is beyond or free from the affects of any of these Gunas. The Lord is a sublime and transcendental Being, and not gross like the world and its creatures that are characterised and defined by one or the other Gunas.

So, this is the third step or essential requirement for God-realisation—to abandon searching for attributes and qualities in an entity known as ‘Consciousness’ that is essentially sublime, subtle and cosmic in nature.

This understanding or realisation has one big benefit—it brings the spiritual aspirant closer to the truth about his own self known as the Atma which is the same ‘consciousness’ at the individual level that is known as ‘Paramatma’ or the Supreme Being at the cosmic and universal level of existence.

This requirement is actually an extension of the previous one where one was asked to eliminate the sense of duality. It is an obvious and natural corollary to it—because if one is torn between doubts and dichotomies, one cannot get peace and happiness even in their rudimentary form, so there is no question of getting it in their best form, in their supreme form—“*duralabha paramānanda*”] (4).

Like the 'Chataurdashi' (the fourth lunar day—"cauthi"), the fourth way or the fourth requirement for reaching or attaining oneness with the Lord is to forsake the company or getting influenced by the 'Buddhi' (intellect), the 'Mana' (mind), the 'Chitta' (sub-conscious) and 'Ahankar' (pride or ego) (cāri pariharahu bud'dhi-mana-cita-ahamkāra).

By doing this, pure wisdom would sprout or arise in one's heart (bimala bicāra), and thereafter one would be able to attain bliss and stability that originates within his own self, within his inner being, that transcends all confusions and perplexities. It would help him to realise the 'self' which is pure consciousness and a fount of eternal bliss and beatitude (paramapada nija sukha sahaja udāra). It is beyond the grossness of existence where the above mentioned foursome ('Buddhi', 'Mana', 'Chitta' and 'Ahankar') matter⁵.

[⁵These four entities are collectively called the 'Antahakaran' or the 'inner-being' of a creature. The main idea is that after controlling the self from all confusions arising from the external world by eliminating the effects of Dwaita and the Gunas, one should strive to calm down one's inner being by controlling these four factors or units—viz. bud'dhi-mana-cita-ahamkāra.

These entities create a lot of tug and push, like a tug-of-war, on the aspirant, mostly in the opposite direction of each other. He may have overcome all sources of unease and distortions arising from the outside world, but he also needs to control the agitations created inside his own self by these four entities. For instance, the intellect would advise on one line of action, and the sub-conscious would prod him towards a different direction. The person's ego may come in between and he may or may not listen to either the mind or the sub-conscious, and do what his instincts, his impulses tell him.

While for one moment he would be inclined to believe in the existence of the Lord God and to obey the directions given in this verse because his mind agrees with it and his subconscious says that it is the correct path, but instantly he may be in doubt because his intellect will intervene and call all this hogwash and hearsay and blind faith. He will start arguing and debating on the reliability of the advice given in the scriptures, and judging the truthfulness and the authenticity of an entity that is extremely sublime and subtle, and is essentially beyond the reach of the gross sense organs of the body for them to judge it. So all this creates a lot of confusion and agitations for the spiritual aspirant. He is dislodged from the path he had stepped on in the beginning of his spiritual journey.

It is like a king having too many ministers and advisors, all of them giving contradictory advices to him.

This is the fourth step or requirement for a spiritual aspirant. One should learn to remain calm and unmoved by the proddings and naggings and pinchings of the mind, the intellect, the sub-conscious and one's ego.

One should learn not be a 'doer' but simply an 'observer'; one should not involve oneself in this world but consider everything neutrally as if they were all playful activities or sport of the Lord God himself. One should live in the world and do what one is expected to do with equanimity and a neutral attitude, being unmoved by the results of his actions, whether they are favourable to him or otherwise.

In other words, a true spiritual aspirant is expected to be dispassionate, detached, neutral and equitable in his dealings with the world. He should not allow ego or pride to come in anywhere. Naturally and logically then, there would be bountiful peace in the heart.] (5).

The fifth day called ‘Panchami’ (pāṁca'i) represents the fifth method or requirement for the spiritual aspirant: It is not to be enslaved by, or not to listen to, or pay attention to or heed the demands of (inha kara kahā na kījiyē) the five sense organs of the body—such as touch, taste, speech, smell and sight, as well as the objects related to them in the gross world (pāṁca parasa, rasa, sabda, gandha aru rūpa), because by being servile to them, one shall have to fall in a dark, dry well representing this (materialistic, illusionary, deluding, tormenting, selfish and quagmire-like) world (and re-enter the vicious cycle of birth and death) (bahuri parabha bhava-kūpa)⁶.

[⁶This is the fifth requirement for a spiritual aspirant—he must learn to practice self-control or self-restraint over his sense organs of perception. These have a natural tendency to be attracted to their respective objects in the world, creating a lot of temptations for the spiritual aspirant, which if not controlled would make him an easy prey and get trapped in their vice-like grip. He would become indulgent and submerged in this world of material charms and get attached to it. On the one hand he was trying to free himself from all entanglements, and now he has himself volunteered to get trapped if he listens to what his sense organs demand from him.

So a wise person is advised to neglect the urges of his body, for otherwise he would fall in the cycle of birth and death which would rob him of all his peace and happiness. He must remember that his sense organs are his worst enemy because they live with him as long as he lives in this world surrounded by its countless charms that attract these sense organs, and if he loses his guard he would be deluded after some time. So constant vigil is needed against their nefarious designs.] (6).

Like the sixth day called ‘Shasthi’ (chaṭha), the sixth path or the sixth requirement for attainment of success in one’s spiritual endeavours and coming close to Lord Ram, (“janakasutā-pati” lāgi) to obtain bliss and happiness for one’s self consists of conquering the six hurdles or obstacles which are like one’s enemy in his spiritual quest (ṣaṭabaraga kariya jaya)⁷.

Verily indeed, the fire of greed, desire, yearnings, avarice et al is not quenched (doused; calmed down) (nahim butā'i lōbhāgi) without the water symbolised by the grace and kindness of Sri Raghupati (Lord Ram) (raghupati-krpā-bāri binu).

[⁷These symbolic six ‘enemies’ that need to be overcome, conquered and subjugated are the following: Kaam (lust, passion, desires, lasciviousness, covetousness), Krodha (anger, wrathfulness, ill-will, discord, reprisals, vengeance, animosity etc.), Lobha (greed, avarice, wistful longing, yearning), Moha (ignorance, delusions, attachments, infatuations, enticements, hallucinations and illusions created by this temporal world), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride, hypocrisy, belligerence) and Matsarya (malice, envy, jealousy).

The sixth necessary step that a spiritual aspirant must take is to control all these six negative traits that are present in him. He must remember that he needs the grace of Lord Ram and the Lord’s blessings to be successful in this, because these factors are very strong and they defy all normal efforts to bring them under one’s control. To wit, a devotee has to pray to the Lord to help him overcome these six negativities inside him. Obviously this would entail having devotion and faith in the Lord in the first place, and this would in turn automatically pave the way for success in all other steps because having devotion, faith and affection for the Lord is the fundamental requirement for any spiritual aspirant or seeker.] (7).

Like ‘Saptami’, the seventh lunar day (*sātaim*), the seventh path or the seventh requirement is to contemplate seriously on the real object of acquiring or receiving this human body (which is impure, short-lived and full of grossness, but it is praised nevertheless as being very rare to get even for the gods).

This body is made of seven elementary constituents (“*saptadhātu-niramita tanu kariya bicāra*”—blood, lymph, flesh, muscles, bones, sperms and mucous). The only object and purpose of acquiring or receiving this body, the only fruitful use of this human body is to be benevolent, beneficent, compassionate, merciful, helpful and kind to others (*tēhi tanu kēra ēka phala, kījai para-upakāra*). [To wit, the best use to which one can put his body is to be helpful to others in their hour of need and distress, in a selfless way.]⁸

[⁸The seventh way for a spiritual aspirant who wishes to attain eternal peace and happiness for himself and to reach a stature of being one with the Lord God is to be selflessly helpful to other living beings just as the Lord himself is selflessly helpful and merciful to all living beings. This essentially is based on the philosophy that the living being is an image of the Supreme Being, the Lord of this creation—but to attain this honourable and exalted stature one needs to be like the Lord in the sense that he must exhibit the eclectic and excellent virtues that are exclusive to and characteristic of the Lord. And one of these auspicious and grand virtues is to be a selfless helper of other living beings, just as the Lord himself is.

If the body is not thus employed, it is a worthless and abhorable bundle of filth—blood, mucous, flesh, lymph, bones, veins, muscles, urine, stool etc.

Refer stanza nos. 1 of verse nos. 201 and 202 herein above which also stress on the need to employ one’s body to help others.] (8).

Like ‘Ashtami’, the eighth lunar day (*āṭha'im*), the eighth path or way for a spiritual aspirant is the realisation that Lord Ram is the Supreme Being and a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness, and is therefore absolutely without attributes and free from all the faults or shortcomings associated with this gross creation, because the Lord transcends everything in existence (*nirabikāra śrīrāma*).

Therefore, one must be convinced that the Lord is beyond all the eight aspects and components of Prakriti (Nature) (*āṭha prakṛti-para*).

Verily and in all sooth, say how can this transcendental, sublime, subtle, ethereal and exalted Being known as ‘Hari’ (Lord Ram) be attained (*kēhi prakāra pā'ya hari*) while one is burdened by the ugly baggage of countless worldly desires, lusts, wants and wishes which are all extremely gross by their inherent nature as they are all related to the world which is itself extremely gross, coarse, materialistic, mundane and full of negativities of all kinds (*hr̥daya basahim bahu kāma*)⁹.

[⁹How can anything having its origin in something that is faulty, tainted, gross and inane like this material world be equivalent to another thing that is sublime, subtle, pure and exalted like the cosmic Consciousness, which is the primary form of the Supreme Being?

Therefore, if a person has even a trace of link with this world, if he has any taints and negativities such as ‘Kaam’ in him, he becomes gross and heavy in the sense that he is like a kite that is too heavy to fly freely into the sky, and if its movement is restricted by the virtue of it being tethered to the ground with a short string then it is also prevented to soar higher and higher in the sky!

To wit, if one wishes to attain oneness with the Lord and a spiritual stature where he can identify himself with ‘pure consciousness’ which is the essential form of

the Supreme Being, then he has to inculcate in him virtues that would be in accordance with his wishes—i.e. there must be a perfect resonance between the individual ‘self’, i.e. the spiritual aspirant, and the supreme ‘Self’ that is Lord Ram.

Hence, the eighth way of attaining the Lord or establishing oneness with him is to have enlightenment, wisdom and erudition, to be self-realised, to understand that the object of his worship, adoration, devotion and affection is not any human being by the name of ‘Ram’, but a divine and sublime entity that transcends all aspects of Nature, an entity that is beyond the attributes of Nature itself. The only entity that fits this bill is the ‘cosmic Consciousness’ that is pure, taintless, attributeless, ethereal and universal in nature. Therefore, Lord Ram is pure Consciousness. And since this ‘consciousness’ also resides in the body of the spiritual aspirant as his own ‘self’ known as the Atma or his soul, it follows that with sprouting of wisdom he would realise that the Lord resides in his own being as the Atma. This is ‘self-realisation’, and obviously it leads to the feeling and the experience of ‘oneness with the Lord’!] (9).

Like the ninth day of ‘Navami’ (*navamī*), the ninth path or the ninth requirement for the spiritual aspirant is the realisation that if one does not secure one’s well-being and welfare (in the form of attaining liberation, deliverance, salvation, emancipation of soul) while living inside this body having nine holes or openings (literally, a “city with nine gates”) (*navadvāra-pura basi jēhi na āpu bhala kīnha*), then that person would have to wander aimlessly in numerous births like a vagrant, and invite interminable sufferings and miseries for himself in the wake of this foolishness of his (*tē nara jōni anēka bhramata dārūna dukha līnha*)¹⁰.

[¹⁰There are *nine* so-called doors of the body. These are the following: two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, one mouth, one anus, and one urethra. Refer: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 3/18; Yog Tattva Upanishad, verse no. 141; and Kshuriko-panishad, verse nos. 2-5. (ii) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 107. (iii) Atharva Veda—Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 2/1.

The aspirant’s true self is his Atma, and this Atma is trapped in a body. Like any prisoner who wishes to find an opportunity to escape from his captivity and bring to an end all his mental agonies and physical sufferings would be looking for an opening in the prison walls to run out of it, the Atma, which is suffering so much from the horrors of birth and death and life in this gross world, should also use this body to find freedom for itself.

It ought to realise that whereas a prisoner would be too happy to find even one single door that is open for him to escape, the Atma should rejoice that its prison in the form of the human body has not one but ‘nine doors’! So on the face of it the Atma’s chances of escape should be high and extremely easy. But it is so ironical and unfortunate that inspite of this golden opportunity to find liberation and deliverance, the Atma representing the creature misses this chance, and it remains trapped in this prison-like body. So what happens? Like a prisoner who is shunted from one cell to another, from one prison to another depending upon his behaviour and doing work allotted to him while he is in the prison, the Atma also roams from one birth to another, from one body to another depending upon the deeds done during any given one phase in the cycle of birth and death.

Therefore Tulsidas gives this ninth advice to a wise spiritual aspirant—that this is his great chance to break free from the cycle of transmigration and attain deliverance, emancipation and salvation for his soul while he has taken birth as a human being, because if he misses this chance then no one can be sure in which kind

of body he would be reborn in his next birth—for there are thousands and thousands of forms that a creature's Atma is forced to assume during its long journey through this world, until the time liberation and deliverance is obtained. Hence, one should control oneself and attempt sincerely and diligently to achieve salvation, emancipation and welfare of the soul while still living in this world with a human body. If the chance is lost now, it won't come again for a very long time.] (10).

Like the tenth day of the lunar cycle called 'Dashmi' (dasaim^ñ), the tenth way or requirement for a spiritual aspirant is to understand that if he is not able to exercise control or restraint over his ten sense organs (dasahu kara sanjama jō na kariya jiya jāni), then all other efforts made by him to attain Lord Ram, who holds the bow named Sarang in his hands (sāramgapāni), would fail miserably (sādhana br̥thā hō'i saba milahim na)¹¹.

[¹¹One should have control over the ten sense organs, otherwise all his efforts come to a naught and bear no fruits. On the contrary, he becomes a slave to these ten masters, and such a servile serf cannot expect to meet the Lord.

The ten sense organs of the body are the following: five gross organs of perception such as eyes, nose, tongue, ear and skin, and five gross organs of action such as mouth, hands, legs, excretory and reproductive.

The tenth advice given to a spiritual aspirant is to practice exemplary self-restraint on these ten servants who may make successful or ruin one's spiritual efforts. Forsooth, if a noble person is not able to control his attendants or servants during his journey or even during his routine life, then he is bound to suffer a lot. Since he has to depend upon his servants and attendants in order to carry out his duties and extended responsibilities in this world, if they are corrupt and not under his orders, his household would be in a chaos and all his affairs would be in disarray.

The creature's Atma interacts with the outside world through the medium of the body, and the part of the body that interacts with the outside world is made up of these ten units or components. These ten organs form the outer gross aspect of the creature's body. The body is like a chariot with ten horses. The Atma is the passenger and the creature's intellect and wisdom is his charioteer. If these horses are not controlled, the chariot would rock violently and throw the passenger on the ground, leaving him wounded and mortally suffering. Even if this worst does not happen but the charioteer is careless in the sense he does not guide the horses on the right path, the chariot would head in the wrong direction and go far away from its destination.

In the present case, if the ten organs of the body are not controlled, then either the creature would have to suffer immensely in his present life itself because of some reckless and evil deeds done by these organs which would invariably invite wrath and punishment from the world, or the creature would head somewhere opposite to his wished destination of finding emancipation and salvation as well as accessing Lord Ram. The uncontrolled organs would never let him have peace of mind and heart as their wayward habit would be cause of constant nuisance for the creature.] (11).

The eleventh day of the lunar calendar, known as the day of 'Ekadashi' (ēkādasi), stands for the eleventh way for the spiritual aspirant: it is to have a steady mind that has a firm belief that there is only 'one Lord God', and one should serve the Lord with full faith, devotion and commitment, and serve no one else (ēka mana basa kai sēvahu jā'i).

By doing this one single 'Vrat' (i.e. by keeping this one point in mind, following this single path, adhering to this one vow in life, and living upto this one

promise made to one's own self), a person can get the supreme (the best) fruit (*sō'i brata kara phala pāvai*) in the form of an end to the cycle of birth and death (i.e. the spiritual aspirant is able to attain liberation and deliverance for himself; he is able to attain emancipation and salvation for his soul; he finds oneness with the Lord; he attains a state of eternal blissfulness and blessedness that comes by breaking free from the endless cycle of miseries, grief, pain, troubles and torments that are associated with being entangled in the world of transmigration) (*āvāgamana nasā'i*)¹².

[¹²This 'Lord God' is no one else but Lord Ram. The aspirant's mind should not be vacillating, not be uncertain, not be fluctuating between so many doctrines, principles, philosophies and ideologies that land him in a lot of confusions about the truth and reality.

This assertion that there is only 'one Lord God' is in consonance with the principle of 'non-duality' or 'Adwaita' as enunciated in stanza no. 3 of this verse.

Further, the advice that one should adore, worship and have devotion exclusively for Lord Ram and no one else is a reiteration of what is said in stanza no. 2: that the first step towards God-realisation is to have single-minded and unfaltering love, affection and devotion for the Lord. This singular virtue is the stepping stone for the success in other spiritual means because if one has no firmness of faith and singularity of belief in the Lord, if he is uncertain about the divinity and holiness of the Lord, if he doubts whether or not the Lord would be able to provide him with freedom from the cycle of transmigration and its associated problems, then the whole purpose of the exercise would be defeated, and the whole spiritual plan would collapse like a house of cards.

The eleventh day of the lunar cycle is observed as a 'day of fasting' in Hinduism. It is done in a token manner to cleanse one's inner-self of spiritual impurities as far as is possible in a similar way as physical abstinence from food gives rest to the body and helps it to clear its intestines and bowels of accumulated toxins that may have gathered in the gut and the other internal organs over the course of unregulated eating habits during the previous month.

This 'Vrat' or religious fasting is a symbolic way of doing low-intensity of Tapa (penance and austerity); it is a way of doing self sacrifice because one uses exemplary self-control over one's sense organs and their natural urges and temptations during this period.

And like the excellent reward that accrues to one by doing anything praiseworthy in one's life, anything that is noble, auspicious and pious, having single-minded devotion and affection for Lord Ram and worshipping the Lord with singular faith and commitment would also yield exemplary reward relevant to it—which is in the form of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for the soul, which means freedom from the cycle of birth and death, and the attainment of an eternal state of blissfulness, beatitude and felicity in its wake.] (12).

The Twelfth day called 'Dwadashi' (*dvādasi*) stands for the twelfth method prescribed for the spiritual aspirant: it entails giving of alms and doing charity (*dāna dēhu asa*)¹³.

By doing this, one becomes fearless and no obstacle can hinder his path or cause consternation and affright to him anywhere in this world, in any of the three divisions of the world (*abhaya hō'i trailōka*). [This implies that every creature would be pleased and happy with him. The Gods in heaven, all the mortal living beings on earth, and even the evil spirits of the nether world will respect such a person. After all, everyone honours and likes a person who is selfless and benevolent and charitable by

his nature. He will have no enemies, will be surrounded by friends, and therefore he would have nothing to fear from. No one would create any hurdle in his chosen path, but would rather extend all help in any manner they can to him.]

[That is why—] A person who is ever ready to selflessly help others in their need and distress is assured that no distress and misery would torment him (*parahita-nirata sō pārana bahuri na byāpata sōka*)¹⁴.

[¹³Like doing Vrat on the Ekadasi day, one is required to give alms and make charities the next day, i.e. on the day of the Dwadashi. This is because the Vrat of Ekadasi is treated as a spiritual exercise which is like doing a religious sacrifice, and giving of alms and making charities at the end of a sacrifice is mandatory to successfully conclude it.

¹⁴This is another way of reiterating what is already said in stanza no. 8 herein above—which stresses on selfless service done to other creatures. It means one should have a benevolent, beneficent and charitable temperament in life. One should do noble deeds that are without any motive, that are free from self-interest, and that are not done under some compulsion or fear. One should always be eager to involve oneself in doing good to others without favour and fear.] (13).

The thirteenth day is called ‘Trayodashi’ (*tēraśi*), and it symbolises the thirteenth mean or way for a spiritual aspirant to reach his objective. It is this: one should rise above or transcend or remain unaffected by the characteristic influences of the three stages or states in which consciousness exists in this world (*tīna avasthā tajahu*)¹⁵.

Once this is achieved, one should singularly worship Lord Ram and have devotion for the Lord (*bhajahu bhagavanta*)¹⁶.

Verily indeed, the Lord God (here meaning Lord Ram), who is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness, cannot be perceived or known or attained by employing any of the elements that one would normally employ to learn about anything in this world—such as by the use of one’s Mana (mind and its intellect), by doing of Karma (doing deeds such as fire sacrifice, penance, pilgrimage, repetition of Mantras, etc.) or employing the faculty of speech known as Vaani (the spoken word in the form of discourses, discussions, hearing the scriptures and preaching based on their doctrines) (*mana-krama-bacana-agōcara*).

The Lord is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent in this creation (*vyāpaka, vyāpya*) (because he is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness). This being so, the Lord is infinite and eternal (*ananta*)¹⁷. [Like water that is imperceptibly but inherently and surely present in a block of ice, this ‘Consciousness’ is present everywhere.]

[¹⁵The three states of existence of consciousness are the following—the waking known as ‘Jagrat’, the dreaming state known as ‘Swapna’, and the deep-sleep state known as ‘Sushupta’. Hence here the aspirant is advised not to be affected by any of the disturbances caused to his inner-self during these three stages of existence of consciousness. He should become totally calm from the inside and indifferent to the countless causes of unrest in this world in which he lives. This is equivalent to be in a state of transcendental existence called ‘Turiya’ which is a state of consciousness wherein the soul exists in a state which is said to be blissful and calm.

¹⁶From the perspective of the spiritual aspirant who is following the steps mentioned in this verse which lays stress on having steady faith and devotion for Lord Ram, this thirteenth path means that such an aspirant should turn inwards and focus his attention exclusively on having devotion, affection and faith in Lord Ram; he should not allow himself to be disturbed or confused by anything originating in the

gross outside world—such as disturbances caused by one's body and its sense organs, the many temptations and delusions related to the gross world, the demands of the world that he is asked to meet, and so on. This idea is an extension of the one expressed in stanza nos. 6, 7, 9 and 11 herein above.

¹⁷The Lord is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness itself that is extremely sublime and subtle. This cosmic Consciousness is all-pervading, all-encompassing, eternal and infinite by its inherent nature. When the spiritual aspirant understands this fact he also begins to realise two important things—(i) the universal presence of the Lord, and that would include in all living beings; and (ii) as the pure Consciousness that also resides in his own inner being as his Atma or soul. Thus, all dichotomy and sense of duality are removed, there is no cause for any more distortion in his view of the Lord vis-à-vis his own self, the rest the creatures and the world around him at large. The universal and uniform existence of the Lord establishes a sort of tranquillity and bliss for the aspirant.

It is to be noted that step-by-step the spiritual aspirant is rising higher in his spiritual endeavours and achieving success in nearing his goal. He has at this stage risen from mere worshipping of Lord Ram as a form of an incarnation of the Supreme Being that has a physical body like other human beings, to a form of Divinity that is sublime and ethereal like the cosmic Consciousness. In this form, Lord Ram stops from being merely an incarnation of the Supreme Being to being the pure cosmic Consciousness that is at the heart of the entire creation. In this form, Lord Ram becomes not only the human incarnation of the Supreme Being but as the all-pervading and all-encompassing form of the Supreme Being known as the 'Viraat Purush', the form that has a cosmic dimension, a form that spreads to each and every corner of creation, a form that lives outside as well as inside of everything and entity that exists in this creation.

The Lord cannot be understood or grasped by the mind, deed or speech because he exists in a subtle, sublime and ethereal form, and not like anything that can be the subject matter of perception by the senses.] (14).

The fourteenth day of 'Chaturdashi' (caudasi) represents the fourteenth way of thinking that a spiritual aspirant should aspire to have. It is that the Lord is uniformly present in all the fourteen divisions of creation (caudaha bhuvana)¹⁸; and that the Lord is a universal 'Goupāl', literally one who takes care of his herd of cows, here meaning the Lord who takes care of all living beings and all entities of creation—the animate as well as the inanimate (acara-cara-rūpa gōpāla)¹⁹.

But unless the creature is able to remove his notion of duality, the Lord does not free him from the trap of this world and from the net of transmigration (bhēda gayē binu raghupati ati na harahim jaga-jāla)²⁰.

[¹⁸As has already been said in earlier stanzas, this is an extension of the idea that the Lord is 'all-pervading, all-encompassing and infinite in form, as he is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness.

The fourteen divisions of creation are the following: according to Padma Puran, and they are the following—(A) The upper worlds called Urdhva Lokas are seven in number:—(i) Bhu/Bhūḥ, (ii) Bhuvaha/Bhuvah, (iii) Swaha/Swah, (iv) Maha/Mah, (v) Janaha/Janah, (vi) Tapaha/Tapah, and (vii) Satyam/Satyam. (B) The seven nether worlds or lower worlds called Adhaha/Adhah Loka:—(i) Atal/Atala, (ii) Vital/Vitala, (iii) Satal/Sutala, (iv) Rasaatal/Rasātala, (v) Talaatal/Talātala, (vi) Mahaatal/Mahātāl, and (vii) Paataal/Pātāla. The total number of Lokas is, therefore, fourteen.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto)1, section 1, verse no. 1 says that these fourteen Bhuvans are protected by Brahma the creator who created this world.

The Atharva Veda's Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 35 says that Brahma-Loka is like the ceremonial umbrella on the head of Lord Vishnu, while the seven nether worlds known as the 'Patal-Lokas' represent the Lord's feet.

¹⁹This means that the Lord is the Supreme care-taker of all living beings as well as even the gross things of creation. Everything is duly cared for by the Lord like a wise emperor who does not neglect even the smallest thing in his realm.

²⁰Once again we see that this stanza builds upon the principle of non-duality already affirmed in stanza no. 3 of this verse.] (15).

Like the full moon night of 'Purnamasi' (pūnōm), the fifteenth, the last and the best path or means for attainment of the Lord God (or "God realisation"; experiencing the bliss that comes when one has come in direct contact with the Supreme Being) is to get completely soaked, imbued and drenched in the juice of devotion, reverence and affection for the Lord, i.e. to have the highest level of 'Bhakti' for the Lord (prēma-bhagati-rasa).

Verily indeed, this single factor of having exemplary Bhakti for the Lord God (which is a combination of having devotion, faith, conviction, commitment, affection, love, reverence, and total reliance and surrender to the Lord) is the finest spiritual virtue an aspirant can have, and it is deemed to be equivalent to God-realisation, it is tantamount to having direct access to the Lord God. Hence, a person who has obtained the fruit of Bhakti is deemed to have accessed Lord Hari (hari-rasa jānahim dāsa).

Thus, Bhakti bestows all the eclectic rewards upon the spiritual aspirant that come with God-realisation—such as having the virtues of 'Sama' (equanimity, equality and evenness of mind), 'Seetal' (calmness, tranquillity, peace and serenity), freedom from 'Maan' (ego, haughtiness, false pride, vanity and arrogance), acquisition of 'Gyan' (wisdom, true knowledge, enlightenment, erudition and sagacity), and dispassion or neutrality towards 'Vishaya' (the tendency of the sense organs of action and perception to be tempted towards their respective objects in this gross world to seek self-gratification) (sama, sītala, gata-māna, gyānarata, viṣaya-udāsa)²¹.

[²¹Having "Bhakti" is the pinnacle of all spiritual endeavours, it is like the best fruit and the best flower of the tree which has so many branches with so many flowers and fruits symbolised by all the various efforts that one has made for God-realisation with their own set of rewards and glories.

Bhakti is compared to the 'full moon' because it is the most glorious and the most magnificent and the most rewarding of all spiritual virtues a person can possess. It is a culmination of all other spiritual efforts that an aspirant has been making previously; it is the pinnacle of the shrine of an aspirant's spiritual practices. It is the most glorious and the best of all efforts, as well as the result of all other efforts. It is the nearest one can get to God-realisation as its symptoms or signs are equivalent to being one with the Lord.

A person who practices true Bhakti is loved by the Lord as his dearest devotee, and such a person exhibits such auspicious and noble traits that are synonyms of divinity, piety and holiness—such as experiencing perpetual bliss, blessedness, beatitude, tranquillity and peace, having no attraction for the false charms of the material world, being free from all ignorance, delusions and their

accompanying confusions and agitations, being enlightened and self-realised, and so on and so forth.

Even as the disc of the moon goes on progressively increasing in its shine, beauty, glory and magnificence day-by-day through its 15-day waxing phase till the time it reaches the zenith of these qualities on the full moon night when it is at its best and most charming form, all other efforts made by the aspirant go on enhancing his spiritual stature, glory, potentials and powers till he attains 'Bhakti' which marks his final success in his spiritual pursuit. It is the pinnacle which all spiritual aspirants aim to reach as it is equivalent to being the nearest to the Lord God, and it grants bliss, happiness and joy that is attained with 'God-realisation'.

The importance of 'Bhakti' has been stressed by Lord Ram himself in the epic book written by Tulsidas—"Ram Charit Manas", in its Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Doha no. 46; and (ii) Doha no. 85 along with Chaupai line nos. 3-8 that precede it.] (16).

[In the above stanza it is described how 'Bhakti' is the best of all spiritual achievements and is like the glory of the moon on the full moon night. Now in this present stanza no. 17, Tulsidas says that when a spiritual aspirant has obtained Bhakti, he is very ecstatic, extremely elated, happy and joyous like a person who has reached his goal after a long and arduous journey. It is time to celebrate and cheer up to enjoy the bliss and happiness that comes with Bhakti.

To give an idea of how merry a person who has Bhakti in him feels, Tulsidas has invoked the festival of 'Holi' to draw a parallel. It is a festival when everyone is in an ecstatic and celebratory mood: there is singing and dancing and festivities in abundance everywhere; people cheerfully sprinkle coloured powder and spray coloured scented water on each other and everywhere; they enjoy sumptuous feasts and exchange greetings; even those people who are not favourably inclined are welcomed and embraced; there is an atmosphere of bonhomie and brotherhood; there is a recess from all work and mundane affairs; and so on and so forth.

This general atmosphere of festivity and celebration that is so characteristic of Holi has been cited by Tulsidas to draw a parallel with the way a spiritual aspirant feels and the happiness he experiences within himself when he has attained Bhakti for the Lord God. It is a time for him to celebrate; he is elated, and in an ecstatic and blissful mood. There is no worry in the world for him, and he sings and dances like a lark in spiritual merriment.

The similarity between 'Holi' that is celebrated on a full moon night, and 'Bhakti' that is likened to a full moon is very remarkable. The rituals associated with Holi are observed in the night of the full moon, and the celebrations take place the next day. Here it means that first the person obtains Bhakti, and then he experiences its spiritual rewards that spontaneously makes him feel extremely blissful, cheerful and ecstatic.]

The three great tormentors called the 'Trai-Taap'²² that constantly harass a living being in this world are burnt in the holy fire lit during the festival of Holi (*tribidha sūla hōliya jarai*). This done, let us now play 'Phaag' or the colours of Holi (*khēliya aba phāgu*)²³.

[Tulsidas advises the spiritual aspirant—] 'If you sincerely want supreme bliss to sprout in your heart and mind (*jō jiya cahasi paramasukha*), then follow the path I have advised you (in this verse) (*tau yahi māraga lāgu*).'

[²²The fact that the three traditional tormentors of the creature that are known as the 'Trai Taaps' cannot be got rid of without having devotion for Lord Ram has been stressed in verse no. 196, stanza no. 1 in this book *Vinai Patrika*. To wit, Bhakti is an essential weapon to fight this enemy in the form of the Trai-Taap. They consist of the following three tormentors: Daihik—problems arising from the creature's own body such as diseases and old age; Daivik—related to Gods and spirits who are opposed and unfavourable; Bhautik—torments from other terrestrial creatures and material things of the world, such as their shortage, inaccessibility, incompatibility etc. These are called the 'great fires' because they torment all living beings to some degree.

During the rituals associated with Holi, a sacred community fire is lit, and in it offerings are made to symbolise the burning of all sins and evils that a person possesses. Celebrations that are characteristic of Holi are held on the next day.

Similarly, the spiritual aspirant first burns all his negativities, flaws and sins etc. in the symbolic fire of Bhakti for Lord Ram, and then he feels light from the burden of this baggage and celebrates his freedom from them. A person who has Bhakti in him is in a highly cheerful mood like the people who celebrate Holi—he has no worry and no grief; he is ecstatic and exhilarated; he is blissful and at peace with himself.

²³The symbolism of enjoying and celebrating Holi vis-à-vis Bhakti has been explained in the introductory note of this stanza herein above.

Holi is symbolic of fun and frolic, of cheerful and carefree life full of merry making and enjoyment, a life free from grief and worries. It is marked by celebrations, singing, dancing, merry-making, ecstasy and exhilaration. The multiple colours used to play it symbolise the various hues and shades of one's emotions and sentiments. When colour is liberally sprinkled on people, they all look alike, and this symbolises the removal of distinctions—just as it is expected from a spiritual aspirant as stressed in stanza nos. 3-5, 14, 16 and 17 herein above.

Similarly, one should be drenched from head to toe in the multi dimensional devotion and love for the Lord just like one is drenched from head to toe in the coloured water sprayed on him during Holi celebrations. Like the way people keep aside all formal manners of behaviour and lose all inhibitions and reservations during their revelry at Holi festivities, a devotee of Lord Ram too loses all inhibitions and reservations for the sake of having love, affection, adoration, worship and devotion for the Lord. Devotees of the Lord would dance and sing in merry abundance, in exhilaration and ecstasy, losing all distinctions of caste, colour and creed, and becoming uniform in love and devotion for the Lord so much so that they would hug and embrace each other for the good fortune of having attained the blissful state of God-realisation and becoming eligible to break free from the cycle of transmigration with all its incumbent problems.] (17).

The unanimous view of the Vedas, the Purans and the experts (*śruti-purāṇa-budha-sammata*) is that the singing of the glories and worldly activities of Lord Murari (i.e. of the Supreme Being during the period of his incarnation as a human known as Lord Sri Ram, the prince of Ayodhya) are like the sweet songs sung merrily during the festival of Holi (*cām̐cari carita murāri*)²⁴.

If one relies on these methods, one can cross this ocean-like world easily and without hassles (*kari bicāra bhava tariya*).

One should however be cautious not to get sucked in the eddy currents of temptations and charms pertaining to the sensual pleasures and objects of this

materialistic, mundane and gross existence because it would invariably suck the creature into a vortex representing an endless cycle of birth and death, called transmigration (*pariya na kabahum jamadhāri*)²⁵.

[²⁴One should sing the Lord's glories and his holy name cheerfully, whether alone or in a group. It can be done with or without the accompaniment of music and dance. In the latter case it is called doing 'kirtan'. It is a voluntary activity and should be engaged in with devotion and faith, and should not be done under compulsion of any sort. Music and dance add colour and fervour to the exercise, and it engages others who may otherwise be mere spectators or passive witnesses; they now become active participants in this spiritual endeavour.

²⁵Tulsidas means that the outwardly or external enjoyment that comes with singing and dancing while glorifying the Lord and recalling the holy stories pertaining to his life and deeds in his incarnation as Lord Sri Ram should not be merely restricted to a few hours of enjoyment for as long as this music and dancing lasts, but it should be taken to a higher level of sublime spiritual experience when one begins to enjoy the source of divinity flowing from within his own heart, from within his own self at all moments of his existence. This spiritual experience should be perpetual and not limited for some time only. It is a sort of blissful experience that would give the person so great a sense of ecstasy and make him feel so elated, so thrilled and so exhilarated that it would make all the best of charms pertaining to the material world fade into oblivion for him so much so that the person would not be attracted to the latter at all.

In the beginning it may a little difficult to achieve this exalted state of transcendental existence where one lives perpetually in a state of bliss and ecstasy that is beyond the reach of and unaffected by anything related to the gross world and its objects that try to tempt their respective organs of perception and action in the body of the creature, but by diligent practice this exalted spiritual state becomes perpetual, natural and habitual. When this happens, the link between the 'self' or the Atma of the creature with the gross body and the gross world is broken, and a transcendental state of perpetual bliss and beatitude is obtained.] (18).

Sri Hari (Lord Ram) is the only one who can destroy all doubts, confusions and bewilderments (*sansaya-samana*), who can help one conquer all sorrows, miseries, agonies, troubles and tribulations (*damana dukha*), and who is a treasury and abode of eternal joy, happiness, comfort, solace and succour (*sukhanidhāna hari ēka*).

No matter how much one tries, the Lord cannot be attained without the grace of saints and pious souls (*sādhukṛpā binu milahim na, kariya upāya anēka*). [Hence, grace of saints and holy souls is a key that can open this treasury of eternal blessedness; their company helps one progress on the path of spiritualism and attainment of the Lord God.] (19).

To cross over this mundane, delusory and ocean-like world (*bhavasāgara*), following in the footsteps (or example) of the pious, holy and spiritual life of true saints is like a ship (*kaham nāba sud'dha santanakē carana*). [To wit, just like a person can easily and without botheration cross an ocean on board a ship, a wise person who follows the example of attained and self-realised saints and holy people can easily attain the spiritual goal he has set out for himself to achieve. Their life and words act as examples and a guide for a spiritual aspirant as now he would not have to search for answers and solutions for the numerous questions, doubts and problems that he encounters in his day to day life while engaged in his spiritual pursuit.]

Oh Tulsidas! If one boards this ship as indicated herein above, then surely Lord Sri Ram, who is the destroyer and vanquisher of sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations, is attainable without any effort or trouble (i.e. easily, without any hurdles or difficulties) (tulasidāsa prayāsa binu milahim rāma dukhaharana) (20).

Devotion and Affection for Lord Rāma's Holy Feet

Rāga Kānharā

(204)

जो मन लागै रामचरन अस ।
 देह—गेह—सुत—बित—कलत्र महुँ मगन होत बिनु जतन किये जस ॥1॥
 द्वंद्वरहित, गतमान, ग्यानरत, बिषय—बिरत खटाइ नाना कस ।
 सुखनिधान सुजान कोसलपति है प्रसन्न, कहु, क्यों न होहि बस ॥2॥
 सर्वभूत—हित, निर्व्यलीक चित, भगति—प्रेम दृढ़ नेम, एकरस ।
 तुलसीदास यह होइ तबहिं जब द्रवै ईस, जेहि हतो सीसदस ॥3॥

(204)

jō mana lāgai rāmacarana asa.

dēha-gēha-suta-bita-kalatra maham' magana hōta binu jatana kiyē jasa. 1.
 dvandvarahita, gatamāna, gyānarata, biṣaya-birata khaṭā'i nānā kasa.
 sukhaniḍhāna sujāna kōsalapati hvai prasanna, kahu, kyōm na hōnhi basa. 2.
 sarvabhūta-hita, nibryalika cita, bhagati-prēma dṛṛha nēma, ēkarasa.
 tulasidāsa yaha hō'i tabahim jaba dravai īsa, jēhi hatō sīsadasa. 3.

Verse no. 204—If this Mana (mind and heart) could get hitched to (i.e. could develop love and affection for) the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (jō mana lāgai rāmacarana) in the same way as (asa, jasa) it is joyfully attached to and willingly indulges in (maham' magana hōta), as a matter of habit and without making any special effort for it (binu jatana kiyē), the body, the household, one's son, wealth and woman (wife) (dēha-gēha-suta-bita-kalatra)—well, then it (the Mana) can find riddance or freedom from so many countless problems that surround it from all sides (rahita).

Hence, if a person is wise enough to train his Mana to follow this wise advice, then he can be freed from so many bewildering and profound problems that vex a person's spirit and create a lot of discord, confusion and doubts in his mind (dvandvarahita). He is freed from all sense of ego, arrogance and haughtiness (gatamāna). He becomes self-realised and wise, pursuing nothing but enlightenment and Truth (gyānarata). He finds no interest in pursuing the material sense objects of the world that appear to give pleasures and comforts to deluded and less-enlightened persons, or in gratification of his sense organs, as he finds no charm in them, as a result of which he has developed the grand virtues of renunciation and dispassion within his inner-self (biṣaya-birata).

Every single charm of the material world and pride of his own body appear lack-lustre to him in the same way as the sweet dish that turns sour and bitter if it is

kept in a vessel made of brass or an amalgam of copper and zinc (pkhaṭā'i nānā kasa).

Well say (kahu), why would Lord Ram, the wise and graceful Lord of Kaushal who is a treasury of bliss and happiness (sukhanidhāna sujāna kōsalapati) not become pleased and happy with such a self-realised, wise and enlightened devotee of his (hvai prasanna), and why would he not do the devotee's bidding; why would he not surrender himself before such a devoted person (kyōm na hōnhi basa)?¹.

[¹Lord Sri Ram feels so overwhelmed with mercy, compassion, benevolence, affection and dearness for such a devotee that he becomes greatly obliged to him for showing so great faith, love and devotion for the Lord. The Lord then feels that he is morally obliged to do whatever the devotee wishes, and therefore the Lord keeps all his wishes and orders. It appears that Lord Sri Ram has begun to obey his devotee much the same way as the devotee obeys the Lord—it becomes a two-way and mutual love for each other so much so that the munificent and benignant Lord cannot ignore any of his devotee's wishes nor of his welfare. The actual fact is that the gracious nature of the Lord compels him to act as if he was subservient to his own devotees.] (1—2).

A person (who has thus developed devotion and love for Lord Sri Ram's holy feet in the manner described above) becomes immaculate in character and exhibits exemplary auspicious and righteous virtues. For instance, he is sincerely and fully involved in the welfare and benefit of others (sarvabhūta-hita); his mind and subconscious become pious, faultless, unattached and dispassionate to everything related to this mundane gross existence (nibryalika cita); he becomes steady and robust in his devotion, love and affection for the Lord God that take firm root in his mind and heart (bhagati-prēma dr̥ṣṭa nēma); and he becomes calm, serene, balanced and quiet, treating everything and all situations with equanimity and equitability so much so that the gravest of provocations and adversities fail to excite him (ēkarasa).

Tulsidas asserts that this exalted state of being is possible only when (tulasīdāsa yaha hō'i tabahim jaba) the Lord ("īsa"; Sri Ram), who had slayed the ten-headed demon Ravana (jēhi hatō sīsadasa)², becomes pleased with the creature and shows mercy upon him (dravai).

[²By alluding to Ravana, Tulsidas means that Sri Ram can vanquish even the most formidable of enemies of the creature symbolised by such negative traits as evils vices, sins, misdeeds, perversions, selfishness, greed, anger, passions, hatred, jealousy, arrogance, haughtiness, and so many countless others that join hands to endlessly torture the helpless creature in this world.] (3).

How to benefit from the Kalpa Tree symbolised by Lord Śrī Rāma

(205)

जौ मन भज्यो चहै हरि—सुरतरु ।
 तौ तज बिषय—बिकार, सार भज, अजहूँ जो मैं कहौ सोइ करु ।।1।।
 सम, संतोष, बिचार बिमल अति, सतसंगति, ये चारि दृढ़ करि धरु ।
 काम—क्रोध अरु लोभ—मोह—मद, राग—द्वेष निषेध करि परिहरु ।।2।।
 श्रवन कथा, मुख नाम, हृदय हरि, सिर प्रनाम, सेवा कर अनुसरु ।
 नयननि निरखि कृपा—समुद्र हरि अग—जग—रूप भूप सीताबरु ।।3।।

इहै भगति, बैराग्य—ग्यान यह, हरि—तोषन यह सुभ ब्रत आचरु ।
तुलसिदास सिव—मत मारग यहि चलत सदा सपनेहुँ नाहिंन डरु ।। 4 ।।

(205)

jau mana bhajyō cahai hari-surataru.

tau taja biṣaya-bikāra, sāra bhaja, ajahūṁ jō mair̥ kahaur̥ sō'i karu. 1.
sama, santōṣa, bicāra bimala ati, satasaṅgati, yē cāri dṛṛha kari dharu.
kāma-krōdha aru lōbha-mōha-mada, rāga-dvēṣa nisēṣa kari pariharu. 2.
śravana kathā, mukha nāma, hṛdaya hari, sira pranāma, sēvā kara anusaru.
nayanani nirakhi kṛpā-samudra hari aga-jaga-rūpa bhūpa sītābaru. 3.
ihai bhagati, bairāgya-gyāna yaha, hari-tōṣana yaha subha brata ācaru.
tulasidāsa siva-mata māraga yahi calata sadā sapanēhum̐ nāhinna ḍaru. 4.

Verse no. 205—Oh my Mana (mind and heart)! If you wish to benefit from the best and the divine fruits of the Kalpa Tree (the ever-green and all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods) representing the Lord God (Ram) (jau mana bhajyō cahai hari-surataru), then you should abandon (diligently avoid and firmly desist from) all the faults, the blemishes and the evil influences of the objects of the sense organs as well as the delusions created by the materialistic world around you (tau taja biṣaya-bikāra), and instead of being lured by them you should worship and have devotion in the holy name of Lord Sri Ram which is the basis and essence of all things auspicious and blessed (sāra bhaja).

Verily, you should do what I (Tulsidas) advise you even at this late stage (for nothing has been lost yet, and no major damage has been done as yet, and redemption can still be yours if you follow this simple advice of mine) (ajahūṁ jō mair̥ kahaur̥ sō'i karu) (1).

You must diligently, faithfully and honestly practice the following four virtues for your own good and welfare (yē cāri dṛṛha kari dharu): (i) You must have 'Samata' (the virtues of equanimity and equitability—"sama"), (ii) you must have 'Santosh' (the virtue of contentedness; having satisfaction in whatever you have and stop yearning or greed for more—"santōṣa"), (iii) you must have 'Vimal Matī' (i.e. your intellect and mind should be free from all corruptions and taints; you must have exemplary purity of mind and wisdom; you must have proper discriminatory ability so as to judge what is right and what is not; you must be able to understand and be aware of what has been said and meant in the scriptures—"bicāra bimala ati", (iv) and you must have 'Satsang' (communion with pious and holy saints; attend communities and gatherings where saints and holy people talk about spiritual and religious matters and divine stories of the Lord God are narrated with due devotion and enthusiasm—"satasaṅgati").

Besides the above, you must diligently and steadfastly abstain from and totally forsake the following negativities and degrading traits that might tarnish your inner self so much so that you must not have even a trace of them in you (i.e. your mind, heart and intellect should be totally free from these spiritual blemishes and scums in your character—"nisēṣa kari pariharu"): You should not have (i) 'Kaam' (lust, passion, desire—"kāma"), (ii) 'Krodha' (anger, wrath, indignation, desire for vengeance and reprisals—"krōdha"), (iii) 'Lobha' (greed, avarice, covetousness,

yearnings, wistfulness—“lōbha”), (iv) ‘Moha’ (attachment, longing, infatuation, ignorance, delusion—“mōha”), (v) ‘Mada’ (pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy—“mada”), and (vi) ‘Raag/Dwesh’ (having affection, attachment, infatuation and longing for one entity while having animosity, discord, malice, ill-will, hatred etc. for another—“rāga-dvēṣa”) (2).

You must listen with your ears the glorious deeds and famous virtues of Lord Ram (śravana kathā), chant or silently repeat with your mouth the Lord’s holy name with due faith and devotion (mukha nāma), concentrate and meditate on the Lord’s divine form in your heart (“hṛdaya hari”; i.e., always remember him), bow your head reverentially before the Lord (sira pranāma), and serve him with your hands (sēvā kara anusaru).

Have Darshan (divine, reverential viewing) with your eyes of the divine form of Lord Hari (Sri Ram) (nayanani nirakhi) who is an ocean of mercy and grace (krpā-samudra hari), and is an embodiment or a personified form of the whole universe, both animate and inanimate as well as visible and invisible aspects of creation (aga-jaga-rūpa bhūpa), is the Supreme Lord of all Lords () and dear husband of Sita (sītābaru)¹.

[¹To wit, you must have that divine sight to see your Lord Ram in all the creatures of the world, in the whole surrounding world, in its gross form as well as subtle invisible form, without distinction and doubts. It is obvious that Tulsidas alludes to the Vedantic concept of the all-pervading, omnipresent nature of God; the Lord is not limited to any specific shape, definition or form as the son of Dasrath or as an abstract ‘neither-this-nor-that’, i.e. Neti-Neti, philosophy. If one has the insight, the Lord is present as much in the log of wood, a beautiful rain-bow coloured canvass of the nature and the invisible elements in the form of sky, fire, air, sound and water as he is in our enemies or friends, besides in our ownself.] (3).

This is the truthful essence of devotion (ihai bhagati), of renunciation, dispassion and detachment (bairāgya), of true knowledge and wisdom (gyāna yaha), and the only way to make the Lord pleased with you (hari-tōṣana yaha). Verily therefore, you should follow this auspicious and beneficent path, and be convinced in the veracity of this principle and be steadfast in keeping of this vow (subha brata ācaru).

Oh Tulsidas! This is the path defined, preached or advised by Lord Shiva himself (tulasidāsa siva-mata māraga yahi). By walking on this auspicious, glorious and beneficent path, one shall not have any kind of fear in this world even in one’s dreams (calata sadā sapanēhum nāhinna ḍaru).

[To wit, one would be free from all worries related to the torments created by Kaliyug, by this mundane gross world, by the uncertainty of salvation and emancipation of the soul, and all such spiritual problems that usually torment a creature. A person will surely attain the supreme bliss in the form of ‘one-ness’ with the Lord, where there is no question of any fears, if one follows the advice given in this verse.] (4).

Lord Śrī Rāma’s benevolent and benignant nature

नाहिन और कोउ सरन लायक दूजो श्रीरघुपति—सम बिपति—निवारन ।
 काको सहज सुभाउ सेवकबस, काहि प्रनत पर प्रीति अकारन ।।1।।
 जन—गुन अलप गनत सुमेरु करि, अवगुन कोटि बिलोकि बिसारन ।
 परम कृपालु, भगत—चिंतामनि, बिरद पुनीत, पतितजन—तारन ।।2।।
 सुमिरत सुलभ, दास—दुख सुनि हरि चलत तुरत, पटपीत सँभार न ।
 साखि पुरान—निगम—आगम सब, जानत द्रुपद—सुता अरु बारन ।।3।।
 जाकोजस गावत कबि—कोबिद, जिन्हके लोभ—मोह, मद—मार न ।
 तुलसिदास तजि आस सकल भजु, कोसलपति मुनिबधू—उधारन ।।4।।

(206)

nāhina aura kō'u sarana lāyaka dūjō śrīraghupati-sama bipati-nivārana.
 kākō sahaja subhā'u sēvakabasa, kāhi pranata para prīti akārana. 1.
 jana-guna alapa ganata sumēru kari, avaguna kōṭi bilōki bisārana.
 parama kṛpālu, bhagata-cintāmani, birada punīta, patitajana-tārana. 2.
 sumirata sulabha, dāsa-dukha suni hari calata turata, paṭapīta sambhāra na.
 sākhi purāna-nigama-āgama saba, jānata drupada-sutā aru bārana. 3.
 jākōjasa gāvata kabi-kōbida, jinhakē lōbha-mōha, mada-māra na.
 tulasidāsa taji āsa sakala bhaju, kōsalapati munibadhū-udhārana. 4.

Verse no. 206—Compared to Lord śrīraghupati (Sri Ram), there is no one else as competent and able to remove the miseries, troubles, tribulations and adversities that a creature suffers from (śrīraghupati-sama bipati-nivārana), and more worthy of seeking refuge or shelter with (nāhina aura kō'u sarana lāyaka dūjō).

Say, who else other than Lord Ram has such a humble, simple, egoless, gracious, grateful and obliging nature as to remain under the control or command of one's servants (subordinates, devotees and followers) (kākō sahaja subhā'u sēvakabasa)?

Who else selflessly loves and has profound degree of affection for his devotees (or followers) who have taken refuge and shelter with him (kāhi pranata para prīti akārana)? [Forsooth and without any gainsay, it is Lord Ram and no one else.]¹.

[¹Refer to many other verses of Vinai Patrika earlier which extol these grand virtues of Lord Ram as being the most merciful, gracious, benevolent, benignant and selfless Benefactor for all: for instance, verse nos. 78-80, 134, 152, 154, 160, 166.] (1).

On the one hand Lord Sri Ram regards even the tiniest of virtues of his devotees as being larger than (or of greater importance or value than) Mt. Sumeru (jana-guna alapa ganata sumēru kari)², and on the other hand he forgets (or overlooks) their millions of faults, misdeeds, shortcomings, taints and blemishes (avaguna kōṭi bilōki bisārana).

This is because he is extremely and extraordinarily merciful, forgiving, kind, munificent, benignant and compassionate by his inherent nature (parama kṛpālu).

Indeed, the Lord is like a personified form of the gem known as 'Chintamani' (a gem which removes worries) for his devotees (bhagata-cintāmani)³. [To wit, the

Lord fulfills all their wishes and desires as well as removes all their worries and problems that cause grief to them.]

The Lord is renowned as a purifier of those who are impure, those who are sinners, evil, vile and malicious (**birada punīta**).

Verily, he is the liberator of the downtrodden, the lowly, the humble, the fallen and the outcastes (i.e. the sinful, the evil and the vile creatures who have no hope of ever finding deliverance for their souls)—for the Lord enables or blesses their souls to attain freedom from this ocean-like mundane world of transmigration, and attain emancipation and salvation (**patitajana-tārana**).

[²Mt. Sumeru is the heavenly mountain of gold where the Gods reside. It is said to be the highest mountain in the world.

³Refer also to verse nos. 105, 116, 129, 206, 235 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.]

(2)

The Lord is attained very easily, spontaneously and immediately by merely remembering him (**sumirata sulabha**)⁴. As soon as the Lord hears that his servant (devotee) is in distress, he dashes forward to help him immediately (**dāsa-dukha suni hari calata turata**) and so fast that he does not (have time to) take care of even his own clothes, such as the Pitambar (a yellow, silk body-cloth) that the Lord wraps around his body (**paṭapīta sambhāra na**). [To wit, he rushes forward to help his devotee in whatever state he is, without wasting even a fraction of a moment.]

All the Vedas, the Purans and the scriptures are a witness to it (**sākhi purāna-nigama-āgama saba**), and Draupadi (wife of Pandavas) and Gajendra (the king of elephants) know it very well (**jānata drupada-sutā aru bārana**)⁵.

[⁴Refer verse no. 207, stanza no. 2 herein below.

⁵The story of Draupadi is narrated in verse no. 93 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.

The story of Gajendra is narrated in verse no. 57 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.]

(3).

Poets, bards and self-realised experts (i.e. those who have attained enlightenment and have understood the ‘truth and reality’—“**kabi-kōbida**”), who do not have any kind of negativities in them, such as ‘Lobha’ (greed, avarice, rapacity), ‘Moha’ (ignorance, delusions, attachments, infatuations with anything related to the mundane world), ‘Mada’ (arrogance, haughtiness, pride, vanity, ego, hypocrisy) and ‘Kaam’ (desire, lust, covetousness, passions related to the world and its objects) (**jinhakē lōbha-mōha, mada-māra na**)—all of them unanimously sing the Lord’s fame and glories, they liberally and repeatedly extol his grand virtues and exemplary qualities (**jākōjasa gāvata**).

Oh Tulsidas! Realise this fact and abandon all hopes (from worldly people as well as heavenly Gods) (**tulasidāsa taji āsa sakala**); you must worship and adore (**bhaju**) Lord **Kōsalapati** (Lord Sri Ram) who is the liberator of Ahilya (**munibadhū-udhārana**)⁶.

[⁶The story of Ahilya is narrated in verse no. 43, stanza no. 3 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

The Best Lord is Śrī Rāma

(207)

भजिबे लायक, सुखदायक रघुनायक सरिस सरनप्रद दूजो नाहिन ।
 आनंदभवन, दुखदवन, सोकसमन रमारमन गुन गनत सिराहिं न ॥१॥
 आरत, अधम, कुजाति, कुटिल, खल, पतित, सभीत, कहूँ जे समाहिं न ।
 सुमिरत नाम बिबसहूँ बारक पावत सौ पद, जहाँ सुर जाहिं न ॥२॥
 जाके पद—कमल लुब्ध मुनि—मधुकर, बिरत जे परम सुगतिहु लुभाहिं न ।
 तुलसिदास सठ तेहि न भजसि कस, कारुनीक जो अनाथहिं दाहिन ॥३॥

(207)

bhajibē lāyaka, sukhadāyaka raghunāyaka sarisa saranaprada dūjō nāhina.
 ānamḍabhavana, dukhadavana, sōkasamana ramāramana guna ganata
 sirāhiṁ na. 1.
 ārata, adhama, kujāti, kuṭila, khala, patita, sabhīta, kahūṁ jē samāhiṁ na.
 sumirata nāma bibasahūṁ bāraka pāvata sō pada, jahām sura jāhiṁ na. 2.
 jākē pada-kamala lubdha muni-madhukara, birata jē parama sugatihu
 lubhāhiṁna.
 tulasidāsa saṭha tēhi na bhajasi kasa, kārunīka jō anāthahiṁ dāhina. 3.

Verse no. 207—[This verse is in continuation of the idea expressed in verse no. 206 herein above that says that there is no Lord more worthy of adoration, reverence, offering of worship and faith than Lord Ram.]

There is no other Lord to match Lord Sri Ram (raghunāyaka sarisa-- nāhina) for being worthy of worship, adoration, veneration, devotion and affection (bhajibē lāyaka), as a liberal bestower of happiness, comfort, succour and solace (sukhadāyaka), and as a selfless protector who cheerfully welcomes all those who come to him to seek shelter and refuge in his holy feet (saranaprada dūjō).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, it is never possible to finish counting the legions of the goodness and the glorious virtues of the Lord (guna ganata sirāhiṁ na) who is an abode of eternal bliss and beatitude (ānamḍabhavana), who is a destroyer of distress, miseries, agonies, troubles and tribulations (dukhadavana), who is the remover or eliminator of sorrows, mournings, lamentations etc. (sōkasamana), and who is the companion (i.e. husband) of Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity (who had manifested, along with the Lord, as his consort by the name of Sita) (ramāramana).

[The term “Laxmi's husband” signifies that where there is the Lord, there can be no dearth of prosperity and well-being, there will be no wants or unfulfilled desires left. In this case, it refers to Lord Ram who is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the heavenly Supreme Lord whose heavenly consort is Laxmi.] (1).

Those who are sorrowful, miserable and distressed (ārata), those who are deprived, downtrodden, lowly, humble and meek (adhama), those who are out-castes and

excommunicated by others (*kujāti*), those who are deemed to be rascals, miscreants, deceitful, pervert and cunning etc. (*kuṭila*), those who are wicked, evil, vile, base and mean (*khala*), those who are sinners, evil-doers, decadent and fallen (*patita*), and those who are therefore frightened about their well-being and are scared (*sabhīta*) that they cannot find any shelter anywhere else (*kaḥūṁ jē samāhiṁ na*)—even they reach or are able to attain that exalted state (or stature) by remembering Lord Sri Ram's holy name only once (*sumirata nāma bibasahūṁ bāraka pāvata sō pada*) which is too difficult even for the mighty Gods to access (*jahāṁ sūra jāhiṁ na*)¹.

[¹The exalted state or stature of the soul referred to in this stanza is being ‘one’ with the Supreme Lord who is a manifested form of the supreme Soul of creation known as the ‘Parmatma’, of having attained the final rest in the Lord's holy feet, of having attained the accompanying spiritual benefits in the way of having an eternal feeling of blessedness, bliss and peace, of finding final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death with its incumbent horrors and miseries. In other words, of attaining emancipation and salvation of the soul with its attendant blissfulness and peace.] (2).

[Tulsidas addresses himself in this verse and says—] ‘Oh Tulsidas! Why don’t you have devotion for and worship that Lord (*tulasidāsa saṭha tēhi na bhajasi kasa*) who is an embodiment of mercy, compassion, munificence, benevolence and grace (*kārunika*), who always shows exceptional favour, grace and kindness upon those who are destitutes and have no other support, protection, succour and solace anywhere else in this world (*jō anāthahiṁ dāhina*), and in whose holy lotus-like feet even those exalted sages and hermits who have completely renounced the world and its multifarious charms (*birata jē*) focus their attention and meditate upon like a bee that hovers on a lotus flower with its attention singularly focused on the nectar stored in it (*jākē pada-kamala lubdha muni-madhukara*) so that they can attain the praiseworthy stature of bliss and blessedness that is most spiritually attractive and exalted (*parama sugatihu lubhāhiṁna*)?’

[Note—In the context of the theme of this verse that Lord Ram is the best of all the Lords, refer other verses also—e.g. Verse nos. 153, 154, 157, 159, 179-180, 191.] (3).

The metaphor of the Bird-catcher

Rāga Kalyāṇa

(208)

नाथ सों कौन बिनती कहि सुनावौ ।
 त्रिबिध बिधि अमित अवलोकि अघ आपने,
 सरन सनमुख होत सकुचि सिर नावौ ॥ १ ॥
 बिरचि हरिभगतिको बेष बर टाटिका,
 कपट—दल हरित पल्लवनि छावौ ।
 नामलगि लाइ लासा ललित—बचन कहि,
 ब्याध ज्यों बिषय—बिहँगनि बझावौ ॥ २ ॥
 कुटिल सतकोटि मेरे रोम पर वारियहि,

साधु गनतीमें पहलेहि गनावौं ।
 परम बर्बर खर्ब गर्व—पर्वत चढ़्यो,
 अग्य सर्बग्य, जन—मनि जनावौं ॥३॥
 साँच किधौं झूठ मोको कहत कोउ—
 कोउ राम! रावरो, हौं तुम्हरो कहावौं ।
 बिरदकी लाज करि दास तुलसिहिं देव!
 लेहु अपनाइ अब देहु जनि बावौं ॥४॥

(208)

nātha sōm kauna binatī kahi sunāvaum.
 tribidha bidhi amita avalōki agha āpanē,
 sarana sanamukha hōta sakuci sira nāvaum. 1.
 biraci haribhagatikō bēṣa bara ṭāṭikā,
 kapaṭa-dala harita pallavani chāvaum.
 nāmalagi lā'i lāsā lalita-bacana kahi,
 byādha jyōm biṣaya-bihamṅani bajhāvaum. 2.
 kuṭila satakōṭi mērē rōma para vāriyahi,
 sādhu ganatīmērṁ pahalēhi ganāvaum.
 parama barbarā kharba garva-parbata caṛhaīō,
 agya sarbagya, jana-mani janāvaum. 3.
 sām̐ca kidhauṁ jhūṭha mōkō kahata kō'u-
 kō'u rāma! rāvarō, hauṁ tumharō kahāvaum.
 biradakī lāja kari dāsa tulasihirṁ dēva!
 lēhu apanā'i aba dēhu jani bāvaum. 4.

Verse no. 208—‘Oh Lord (Ram)! How can and in what words should I pray to you (nātha sōm kauna binatī kahi sunāvaum)?

When I look at (i.e. consider) the numerous sins and mischief done by me using various means and methods (involving the three faculties by which a man acts in an unrighteous and contemptuous way—i.e. one’s mind, one’s speech or words, and one’s deeds—“tribidha bidhi amita avalōki agha āpanē”), and then contemplate on (the possibility of) seeking refuge in your holy feet (sarana sanamukha hōta), my head bows down in shame and I feel exceedingly hesitant to come to you seeking shelter and pardon for my misbehaviour (sakuci sira nāvaum)¹.

[¹Refer also to verse nos. 95 and 211 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ in this context.] (1).

[Now, let me outline my misdeeds and pretensions of being pious before the world in order to deceive others, and you will understand the utter shame I feel in coming to face you.]

Disguised as and pretending to be a Lord’s devotee (biraci haribhagatikō bēṣa), I make a beautiful (i.e. misleading, deceitful, fraudulent) net (a snare, a trap) (bara ṭāṭikā).

I camouflage and cover it with green leaves symbolising my nature of being cunning, my character of using all sorts of trickery, fraud, deception and cheating (*kapaṭa-dala harita pallavani chāvaum*).

Then I mount this contraption on a long pole in the shape of your holy name, and put the sticking-gum on it in the disguise of sweet, pleasant-sounding but treacherous and false words (*nāmalagi lā'i lāsā lalita-bacana kahi*)—and I use this contraption (shaped as a tree branch) to trap the birds representing pleasures of the sense organs, the objects of the senses and the charms of the material world like a bird-catcher catches a bird (*byādha jyōm biṣaya-bihamṅani bajhāvaum*)².

[²By this metaphor, Tulsidas means that outwardly one appears to be a saint or a pious soul—complete with a religious mark known as the ‘Tilak’ on the forehead, a rosary in hand, uttering Lord Ram’s holy name from the lips and singing the Lord’s glories aloud in a sweet voice, going around preaching others the virtues of devotion and love for the Lord God as well as other spiritual virtues such as renunciation and detachment, but all this is a mean to deceive the world to make it fall into the trap. In fact, false saints and pretentious persons practice nothing of what they say or preach, for they hanker for worldly things, are eager to gratify their sense organs, are hungry for fame and money, they run after sensual pleasures and worldly comforts, and they utter the Lord’s holy name only to feed their stomachs and not for any kind of spiritual welfare.

Applying such an evil and sinful character upon himself in order to avoid being accused of raising fingers at others and being too pretentious himself, Tulsidas says that in fact he himself is like a cruel bird-catcher who lays a beautiful trap to catch the innocent and unwary bird not only to cause the poor creature immense suffering but also to accumulate a bigger and more heavier burden of sins for himself with each passing day.

The bird-catcher lays a trap consisting of a net that is covered by leaves, and then he spreads some seeds on the ground. As soon as the poor bird comes to eat the seeds, the bird-catcher immediately lets the net fall with the help of a long pole, catching the helpless bird.

In this metaphor, the ‘net’ consists of the false attire and external looks of a devotee of the Lord; the ‘cover of green leaves’ is symbolised by deception and pretensions; the ‘pole’ is sweet words and singing of the glories of the Lord; and the ‘bird’ is the many material sense objects of the world that one covets and grabs at the first opportunity. That is to say, he preaches renunciation but lusts for material things; he preaches the Lord’s holy name but his mind is hooked to the temptations of the world.] (2).

It is such a great irony that though I am so great a sinner, a wicked rascal, a depraved, pervert and unscrupulous fellow that 100 million unrighteous and evil ones can be sacrificed as against my single body-hair (“*kuṭila satakōṭi mērē rōma para vāriyahi*”; i.e. my one hair is equivalent to several million potent vices and sins, and since my body has so many uncountable hairs, my sins and wickedness are also measureless, uncountable, indescribable and immense)—but in spite of that I still try to get myself counted as being the first amongst saints and pious people, and claim to be the most exalted and the best among them (*sādhu ganatīmēṁ pahalēhi ganāvaum*).

Though I am very deceitful, pervert, pretentious, immodest and unashamed of my behaviour and deeds, though I am lowly, mean, wicked and unscrupulous (*parama barbara kharba garva-parbata caṛḥaṭḥ*)—but I have mounted a hill of

pride, arrogance, haughtiness and ego (claiming that I am most holy, pious, righteous and noble!). That is why, though being ignorant and stupid, I dare to call (declare) myself an expert, one who is wise and learned, and is the best among (the Lord's) devotees (agya sarbagya, jana-mani janāvaum)³!

[³Well, Lord, look at my audacity, see how incredulously pervert, ridiculous and wicked I am indeed! I have no compunctions and regret at my behaviour, and I have the temerity to stand before you asking for your mercy and grace inspite of being fully aware of the sort of fellow I am.] (3).

Oh Rāvarō (an affectionate way of addressing Lord Sri Ram who is the King-Emperor and the Lord of all Lords)! I cannot tell whether it is true or false (i.e. whether is it correct or incorrect), but some people speak of me as being one of yours (they say, 'this fellow belongs to Sri Ram'; he is the Lord's devotee and servant). In fact, I too like myself that I be called so (i.e. I love being identified as one of your true devotees, and being honoured and given respect for it) (sām̐ca kidhaum̐ jhūṭha mōkō kahata kō'u-kō'u rāma! rāvarō, haum̐ tumharō kahāvaum̐).

Oh Lord! Just because of this, you should now accept Tulsidas to uphold the high dignity, sanctity, the most exalted stature, the immaculate reputation, the great glories and the immense fame of yourself as well as of your holy name (biradakī lāja kari dāsa tulasihim̐ dēva! lēhu apanā'i aba dēhu jani bāvaum̐)⁴.

[⁴To wit, once I have been identified as being one of your devotees and servants, if I still remain wretched and wicked, sinful and vile, depraved, decadent, perverse and pervert, rejected and dejected, if I still don't find liberation and deliverance from my sins and burden of evil deeds—then just think oh Lord, how will you save your reputation, fame and good name; what will the world say? Saving me is a small price you'll have to pay to protect your own greatness and glories! A great much is at stake—so, hurry-up Lord and don't delay any further in granting me freedom from my miseries and worldly entanglements so that your glories and reputation does not get tarnished in the least due to me.]' (4).

[Note :- There are many other verses in Vinai Patrika that reflect a similar idea as expressed in this verse. Refer—verse nos. 41, 76, 95, 109, 110, 141, 171, 209 among others.

No wonder Tulsidas has cited the example of the cunning 'Bird-catcher' in this verse—he himself is no less clever! See how he has trapped Sri Ram. First he sings Lord Ram's glories, then says about himself that he is the most wretched fellow and a sinful one, and then literally puts the Lord on notice and forces him to protect Tulsidas so as to save his own reputation! What a clever bargain indeed, and a profitable one at that!! Tulsidas invokes Lord Sri Ram's merciful, kind, munificent, compassionate and benevolent nature to fulfil his own desire for liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Tulsidas has so great faith in the Lord's nature and his love for his devotees as well as acceptance of those sinful ones who come to seek the Lord's shelter that he does not fear in literally imposing himself on the Lord, knowing fully well that the gracious Lord can't and won't refuse him. How clever and crafty of Tulsidas indeed it is!]

(209)

नाहिनै नाथ! अवलंब मोहि आनकी ।
 करम—मन—बचन पन सत्य करुनानिधे,
 एक गति राम! भवदीय पदत्रानकी ।।1।।
 कोह—मद—मोह—ममतायतन जानि मन,
 बात नहि जाति कहि ग्यान—बिग्यानकी ।
 काम—संकलप उर निरखि बहु बासनाहिं,
 आस नहि एकहूँ आँक निरबानकी ।।2।।
 बेद—बोधित करम धरम बिनु अगम अति,
 जदपि जिय लालसा अमरपुर जानकी ।
 सिद्ध—सुर—मनुज—दनुजादि सेवत कठिन,
 द्रवहिं हठजोग दिये भोग बलि प्रानकी ।।3।।
 भगति दुरलभ परम, संभु—सुक—मुनि—मधुप,
 प्यास पदकज—मकरंद—मधुपानकी ।
 पतित—पावन सुनत नाम बिश्रामकृत,
 भ्रमित पुनि समुझि चित ग्रंथि अभिमानकी ।।4।।
 नरक—अधिकार मम घोर संसार—तम—
 कूपकहि, भूप! मोहि सक्ति आपानकी ।
 दासतुलसी सोउ त्रास नहि गनत मन,
 सुमिरि गुह गीध गज गयाति हनुमानकी ।।5।।

(209)

nāhinai nātha! avalamba mōhi ānakī.
 karama-mana-bacana pana satya karunānidhē,
 ēka gati rāma! bhavadīya padatrānakī. 1.
 kōha-mada-mōha-mamatāyatana jāni mana,
 bāta nahi jāti kahi gyāna-bigyānakī.
 kāma-saṅkalapa ura nirakhi bahu bāsanāhiṁ,
 āsa nahi ēkahū āmka nirabānakī. 2.
 bēda-bōdhita karama dharama binu agama ati,
 jadapi jiya lālasā amarapura jānakī.
 sid'dha-sura-manuja-danujādi sēvata kaṭhina,
 dravahiṁ haṭhajōga diyē bhōga bali prānakī. 3.
 bhagati duralabha parama, sambhu-suka-muni-madhupa,
 pyāsa padakanja-makaranda-madhupānakī.
 patita-pāvana sunata nāma biśrāmakṛta,
 bhramita puni samujhi cita granthi abhimānakī. 4.
 naraka-adhikāra mama ghōra sansāra-tama-
 kūpakahi, bhūpa! mōhi sakti āpānakī.
 dāsatusī sō'u trāsa nahi ganata mana,
 sumiri guha gīdha gaja gyāti hanumānakī. 5.

Verse no. 209—Oh Lord! I don't have any hope and reliance on anybody else (nāhinai nātha! avalamba mōhi ānakī).

Oh an abode of mercy and compassion (**karunānidhē**)! I say truthfully that my mind, speech and actions have made a solemn and truthful vow (**karama-mana-bacana pana satya**) that I wish to serve the Lord at his holy feet just like the Lord's footwear¹ serves it (**bhavadīya padatrānakī**), as the Lord is my only support and succour in life, and I have no other protection or hope of obtaining relief from anywhere else except from Lord Ram (**ēka gati rāma**).

[¹“Footwear—” is simply a word used to symbolically imply total surrender and submission in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram by the devotee. A benevolent Lord just simply cannot ignore a servant who is so humble and loyal to his Master that he seeks no other service except caring for the Lord's footwear because it is the lowliest of services anyone would like to do.

A person's 'footwear' is the object that gives the person the best service in the form of his comfort and happiness because it protects its master from the roughness of the ground on which he walks and keeps his feet from getting hurt. When a person gets ready to go anywhere, he finally searches for his footwear before stepping out, so it becomes indispensable for him. A person without his footwear is not regarded highly in society, and so it becomes a part of his personality and enhances his dignity and self-respect. The footwear is not praised by anyone for its service to its master, but the master appreciates the footwear and gives it precedence over all other objects he employs for his personal use—for he will not allow anyone else to use his personal footwear.

So, Tulsidas cites this humble object to emphasise his desire to selflessly serve Lord Ram without going about boasting of his nearness with the Lord. And he also expects that the Lord reciprocates his emotions by treating him as one of his closest devotee without whom the Lord would feel as uneasy as a person who feels uncomfortable and incomplete in his attire without wearing his shoes or other forms of footwear though he may be otherwise well dressed and groomed. A master would never discard the sandals or shoes that fit him well and makes him feel cosy and comfortable.

See also verse no. 231, stanza no. 4 in this context.] (1).

Recognising that my Mana (mind and heart—“**jāni mana**”) is an abode of (i.e. tainted by) countless negative traits such as ‘**kōha-mada-mōha-mamatāyatana**’ (anger, arrogance, delusions, attachments, infatuations etc.), I cannot talk of enlightenment, wisdom, true knowledge, metaphysics etc. (**bāta nahi jāti kahi gyāna-bigyānakī**).

Seeing the various desires and yearnings (**kāma-saṅkalapa**), the different types of infatuations and allurements towards pleasures of the sense organs and objects of this materialistic world that I have in my Mana (**ura nirakhi bahu bāsanāhim**), there is no trace of hope or expectation of ever attaining salvation and emancipation for myself (**āsa nahi ēkahū āṁka nirabānakī**) (2).

Though I am very eager to go to the heaven which gives eternity (i.e. eternal peace and happiness) to the creature (inspite of my being devoid of any compatible good deeds, righteousness and other virtues that could lead me there—“**jadapi jiya lālasā amarapura jānakī**”) but it is very difficult for me to achieve success in reaching this auspicious goal (heaven) without practicing the various paths such as austerities, penances, good deeds etc. that have been prescribed by the Vedas (**bēda-bōdhita karama dharama binu agama ati**).

Besides this, rendering of selfless service to mystics and other pious human beings, to gods and even the demonic spirits is also very difficult in practice (*sid'dha-sura-manuja-danujādi sēvata kṛthina*)—because they can be appeased only (or, they are pleased only) when one does ‘Hatha-Yoga’ (severe and forceful penances and austerities—“*dravahim haṭhajōga*”), offer them a part of the offerings in religious sacrifices (*diyē bhōga*), and lay down one's life for them (*bali prānakī*). [All these paths are beyond my means and I won't be able to follow them. So, it is in vain for me to expect anything from the mystics, gods, humans and spirits even if I venture to try to please them.] (3).

The nectar symbolising the virtue of having devotion, worship and adoration of the Lord God is very rare to have and these virtues are very difficult to practice in today's world (*bhagati duralabha parama*).

Even the most exalted of the Lord's devotees and those who are self-realised, such as Lord Shiva (the third of the Trinity Gods), sage Shukdeo (the parrot sage) and exalted sages and hermits, like to behave like a bee (*sambhu-suka-muni-madhupa*) which is oblivious of the surrounding world when it alights on a lotus flower to suck its sweet nectar, and enjoy the feeling of bliss and blessedness that comes with it, but no matter how much they drink of this divine nectar symbolising devotion, worship and adoration for Lord Ram, they are never contented and want more and more of it (*pyāsa padakanja-makaranda-madhupānakī*).

[Verily indeed, if this is the case with such exalted souls, where do I stand because I am very lowly and humble in comparison to them. How can I fathom the depth of the ocean of bliss and ecstasy that comes by drinking the nectar symbolising devotion, worship, adoration and affection for Lord Ram? It is beyond the reach of my mind and intellect.]

It is heard oh Lord that your divine name is able to purify and redeem those who are impure, imperfect, lowly, sinful, evil, downtrodden and fallen (*patita-pāvana sunata nāma*). It is also said that your holy name grants true and abiding peace, happiness, rest and bliss to the creature (by providing liberation and deliverance to him from the cycle of constant misery and sorrows that are associated with this world of transmigration) (*biśrāmakṛta*).

But the great irony with me is that I am unable to take recourse to it because my arrogance and ego have formed such a strong knot in my mind (*cita granthi abhimānakī*) that it blocks my wisdom and misleads my intellect that forces me not to believe in and have faith in your holy name (*bhramita puni samujhi cita*)².

[²To wit, I think that it is too trifling for me to say a few letters of your name in order to get liberation and deliverance from my misery because I don't have faith in them, and I think that I am capable to attain this spiritual goal on my own strength by pursuing other paths, such as acquisition of knowledge, doing penances, sacrifices etc. I am too proud to take help from such a humble thing as a name of someone.

I am too confident of my ability to attain emancipation and salvation by adopting other asupicious means—such as having devotion and doing worshipping of the Lord. It's so absurd and incongruous for me because I have myself said that all other paths are too difficult for me to follow.

The result is my misfortune—inasmuch as my ego and haughtiness and uncertainty of my mind prevents me from taking help of this single source of blessedness and liberation that is so easy to employ, i.e. repeating Lord Ram's holy name as a path for my redemption as it is so powerful yet so easy.

Put simply it means that though I know that the Lord's holy name is an easy way to attain spiritual bliss and peace, I don't use it because I am too proud of myself and think this is a very ordinary method to be employed by those who have no other meritorious virtues to their credit. I am full of pride and ego as I think I have studied the scriptures, am aware of so many other ways to ensure my welfare and good, and am confident that I would be able to practice these ways—though I have said myself that all other paths are beyond my means. Refer stanza no. 2 herein above. That is why I say I am utterly stupid; and for a stupid fellow like me the only hope lies in your nature of being gracious and forgiving for then you will overlook my irrational behaviour and still accept me inspite of the ugly form my mind is in.] (4).

Oh Lord (bhūpa!), Sri Ram! Considering all these factors, my only right is to go to hell (naraka-adhikāra). Based on my evil deeds, I am only eligible to fall in the deep, dark well representing this mundane, temporal world (mama ghōra sansāra-tama-kūpakahi).

But inspite of all these drawbacks of mine, my only hope and succour are you (mōhi sakti āpānakī). This Tulsidas is confident of his redemption when he remembers (or knows) the auspicious fate that was granted to Guha-Nishad, Jatau, Gajendra (elephant) and Hanuman³ because all of them had found eternity and peace inspite of not having done meritorious worthy of its name in this world (sumiri guha gīdha gaja gyāti hanumānakī).

This knowledge and faith in the Lord has bolstered and encouraged me not to have any fear from that quarter—i.e. from the cycle of birth and death because if lowly persons such as Guha, a vulture such as Jatau, an animal such as Gajendra, and creature born low down in the hierarchy of creation in the form of monkeys, such as Hanuman, can have found salvation and emancipation by the grace of Lord Ram, why will not Tulsidas also have it (dāsatulasī sō'u trāsa nahi ganata mana)?

[³The stories of Guha, Jatau and Gajendra have been narrated in notes appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 2, and verse no. 134, stanza no. 4 of this book Vinai Patrika. Refer also to verse no. 210, stanza no. 4 herein below in this context.

As for Hanuman, he was a companion of Sugriv, the monkey prince of Kishkindha. Hanuman proved to be of great service to Lord Ram and was very dear to the Lord. He is regarded as one of the greatest devotees of the Lord.] (5).

What Tulasīdāsa wishes

(210)

औरु कहँ ठौरु रघुबंस—मनि! मेरे।
 पतित—पावन प्रनत—पाल असरन—सरन,
 बाँकुरे बिरुद बिरुदैत केहि करे॥1॥
 समुझि जिय दोस अति रोस करि राम जो,
 करत नहिं कान बिनती बदन फेरे।
 तदपि है निडर हौं कहौं करुना—सिंधु,
 क्योंऽव रहि जात सुनि बात बिनु हेरे॥2॥
 मुख्य रुचि होत बसिबेकी पुर रावरे,
 राम! तेहि रुचिहि कामादि गन घेरे।

अगम अपरबरग, अरु सरग सुकृतैकफल,
 नाम—बल क्यों बसौं जम—नगर नेरे ॥३॥
 कतहुँ नहिँ ठाउँ, कहँ जाउँ कोसलनाथ!
 दीन बितहीन हौं, बिकल बिनु डेरे।
 दास तुलसिहिँ बास देहु अब करि कृपा,
 बसत गज गीध ब्याधादि जेहि खेरे ॥४॥

(210)

auru kaham̐ ṭhauru raghubansa-mani! mērē.
 patita-pāvana pranata-pāla asarana-sarana,
 bām̐kurē biruda birudaita kēhi kērē. 1.
 samujhi jiya dōsa ati rōsa kari rāma jō,
 karata nahim̐ kāna binatī badana phērē.
 tadapi hvai niḍara haum̐ kahaum̐ karunā-sindhu,
 kyōm̐va rahi jāta suni bāta binu hērē. 2.
 mukhya ruci hōta basibēkī pura rāvarē,
 rāma! tēhi rucihi kāmādi gana ghērē.
 agama aparabaraga, aru saraga sukr̥taikaphala,
 nāma-bala kyōm̐ basaum̐ jama-nagara nērē. 3.
 katahum̐ nahim̐ ṭhā'um̐, kaham̐ jā'um̐ kōsalanātha!
 dīna bitahīna haum̐, bikala binu dērē.
 dāsa tulasihim̐ bāsa dēhu aba kari kr̥pā,
 basata gaja gīdha byādhādi jēhi khērē. 4.

Verse no. 210—Oh my dear Raghuvansa Mani (i.e. the ‘jewel’ of king Raghu's dynasty of Ayodhya, Lord Sri Ram—“raghubansa-mani! mērē”)! Do I have any other destination except your holy feet (where I can find peace, protection, succour and solace for myself, where my well-being and welfare are assured and taken care of, where I am welcome and given respect inspite of my countless imperfections, drawbacks and sins) (auru kaham̐ ṭhauru)? [Surely there is no such place other than the holy feet of Lord Ram.]

The obvious reason is that you are the only one who purifies and redeems the sinners and the fallen (patita-pāvana), who gives succour and protection to and takes care of those who have bowed before him to surrender themselves and request the Lord to give them his shelter and refuge (pranata-pāla), and who cheerfully welcomes and offers unquestioned refuge and shelter and protection to those who are destitutes and desolate, who have nowhere to go (asarana-sarana).

Say, who else has this unique quality, this laudable nature, this exemplary character, this noble temperament and this praiseworthy attitude towards the have-nots, the lowly, the sinners, the fallen and those who really are in need of help and solace (bām̐kurē biruda birudaita kēhi kērē)?

[To wit, no other Lord, Master or God would give cheerful shelter to the lowly and the sinners, without asking any questions and without expecting anything in return from them, not even a gesture of thanks! No one would provide selfless shelter to the shelter-less, and at the same time take care of their worldly needs and their spiritual well-being as described above).

[¹The use of the word ‘Mani’, meaning a jewel, is very apt in the context of these grand virtues of Lord Ram. It is a figure of speech to denote that the auspicious qualities of Lord Ram are exemplary and matchless, and no other Lord or God has them—for no other Lord or Master or God would be as gracious, kind, merciful, forgiving, beneficent, magnanimous and benevolent as Lord Ram is in the way described in this stanza. All others would worry about their own reputation that it would be tarnished if they allow themselves to be surrounded by the lowly and the sinful, if they welcome those who have nothing worth to their name and character, but Lord Ram does exactly this—he not only cheerfully welcomes those who have no other place to go but also ensures their spiritual welfare and pardons all their past sins. Of course, ‘pardoning their past sins’ is based on the premise that these sinners won’t repeat their bad ways, but are ready to mend themselves.] (1).

#Oh Lord Ram! Considering my countless faults, imperfections, sins, misdeeds and evil nature (*samujhi jiya dōsa*), though you may be so angry (and annoyed) at me (*ati rōsa kari rāma jō*) that you do not heed my prayers and have literally turned your back on me (i.e. have ignored or neglected me—“*karata nahim kāna binatī badana phērē*”)—but still, oh Lord who is an ocean of mercy and compassion (*karunā-sindhu*), I would persist in my prayers and ask you fearlessly (or “I dare to wonder without any fear in my heart”—“*tadapi hvai niḍara haum kahaum*”) how you manage to remain indifferent and apathetic towards me even after hearing my fervent and distressed call to you for your mercy and help (*kyōm’va rahi jāta suni bāta binu hērē*)? [To wit, oh Lord, I feel sad and baffled at your attitude towards me and my plight.]²

{#This stanza can be read as follows also: “Oh Lord Ram! It appears that you are angry at me due to my baggage of countless faults, imperfections, sins, misdeeds and evil nature, for you seem not to pay heed to my prayers, are indifferent to my pathetic condition, and have turned your back on me. But still I am not afraid of pleading persistently before you, in nagging you and asking you how is it possible for you to be so stern-hearted that inspite of hearing my distressed call seeking your mercy and grace you still remain unyielding and turn your face away from me? I wonder what the reason is because this is absolutely against your affable nature and merciful character—for it is a established fact, and I also know it very well, that you just simply can’t be angry at those who are sinful and humble like me and have come to you seeking shelter and refuge; you simply just cannot turn them away as it is against your basic nature and philosophy; you simply can’t be so stern and stone-hearted.”}

[²To wit, you are famed as being an ocean of mercy and compassion, so it seems impossible and unbelievable that you would be so stone-hearted as to turn a deaf ear to my earnest prayers and heart-felt pleadings because it is inconsistent with your temperament and is not in your nature to be so stern as to refuse to hear the prayers of those who are distressed and humble and ask for your mercy and grace.

And that is why I am ‘fearless’ because I know you can’t be angry at me, and surely there is something amiss here when I imagine that you are not listening to my prayers. Perhaps you are testing my sincerity and commitment, and I am sure that you will not turn me away from your door without showering your largesse of blessings and grace upon me.] (2).

[Now oh Lord, if you wish to know what I want, then listen :-] My greatest desire is to find a peaceful residence for myself which is also the abode where you live yourself, which is your ‘own abode’³ (“*mukhya ruci hōta basibēkī pura rāvarē*”; i.e. to be ‘one with you’; to find emancipation and salvation for my soul; to find liberation and deliverance from this gross body and the cycle of transmigration so that I can have eternal peace which is synonymous with oneness with the Supreme Being).

But unfortunately oh Lord Ram, I face many hurdles in the fulfilment of my wishes. For instance, negative traits such as Kaam (worldly desires, lust and passions) have surrounded me from all sides and tied me in a strong vice-like grip (from which I find myself impossible to free) (*rāma! tēhi rucihi kāmādi gana ghērē*). This makes attaining the state of blessedness, felicity and beatitude that comes with emancipation and salvation inaccessible for me (*agama aparabaraga*). [To wit, this state is the ultimate destination for all living beings that ensures that the individual’s soul known as the ‘Jivatma’ finds a permanent blissful abode in the supreme Soul of creation known as the ‘Parmatma’ by merging with it, by becoming one with it—as this is truly the final destination of the soul of all living beings.]

As for attaining ‘heaven’³, that also eludes me because its access depends on doing great meritorious deeds during one’s life (which I have not done) (*aru saraga sukr̥taikaphala*).

The only destination then left for me is going to ‘hell’ (i.e. condemned to spiritual sufferings), but that is also not in my fate (because I have been repeating your holy name willingly or unwillingly, and have been trying my best to have affection and devotion for you, and no matter how rudimentary my efforts may have been but they nevertheless have their own redeeming powers and spiritual benefits—and thus my passage to hell is also blocked!) (*nāma-bala kyōm basaur̥m jama-nagara nērē*).

[³The subtle difference between the supreme abode of the Parmatma and the heavenly abode of the Gods is this: while the abode of the Parmatma is the first and the ‘supreme’ abode in the sense that it is the best destination for the soul of the creature where it attains eternity, where bliss, beatitude and felicity reign, and from where there is no return to the cycle of birth and death to suffer from its horrors, the second abode known as the heaven lacks this eternity factor. A soul lives in heaven to enjoy the rewards of his meritorious life and deeds, there it enjoys extreme happiness, pleasures and comforts, but when the accumulated treasure of good deeds is exhausted the creature has to come back to this mortal world to carry on with his journey of life. This is primarily because heaven is desired by those creatures who want more and better joy and happiness, more and better sort of comfort and pleasures that they had experienced in this world. They want to continue enjoying such charms. But in the process of doing meritorious deeds in this world that would assure their going to heaven, they inadvertently and unwillingly do some misdeeds of which they aren’t even aware. So if the good deeds have their beneficial effects, then the misdeeds too would have their own set of evil effects. Since the amount of good deeds are overwhelmingly high, the creature first goes to heaven, but when effects of such good deeds wear off, the bad deeds take over and pull him down! And the cycle continues in the next birth.

This is not the case where the creature attains ‘final freedom from this cycle’, i.e. he attains deliverance, salvation and emancipation. In this case, the soul reaches higher state of existence that transcends heaven, a destination that ensures the soul breaks free from the pull of this world and finds its final freedom.

An analogy would explain things simply. When a rocket lifts from the surface of the earth, it has three destinations:—(i) One is that it burns and falls back immediately to earth which is like going to hell. (ii) Second is that it manages to go to a higher level in the atmosphere that enables it to remain there for a long time, circling the earth till its fuel is exhausted, and then it falls back to earth. This is like going to the heaven—for none of the noise and pollutions of earth affect the rocket at such heights. (iii) And the third option is to break free from the gravitational pull of the earth altogether and venture into the deep realm of the cosmos, from where there is no return. This is like finding eternal liberation for the soul of the creature.] (3).

As a result, I have no place to live (i.e. I have become homeless and a destitute; I roam like a vagabond) (*katahum̐ nahim̐ ṭhā'um̐*). Now tell me oh Lord of Kaushal (Ayodhya), where should I go (*kaham̐ jā'um̐ kōsalanātha*)?

I am poor, impoverished, wretched, meek, humble and downtrodden, one who is resource-less (*dīna bitahīna haum̐*)⁴. I am very worried, restless and agitated at not having a permanent shelter (or a roof over my head) (*bikala binu dērē*).

Hence oh Lord, please have mercy upon this wretched Tulsidas and permit him to reside (*dāsa tulasihim̐ bāsa dēhu aba kari kṛpā*) in the village inhabited by (your devotees who were no less wretched, sinful, lowly, imperfect and miserable than Tulsidas, such as) Gajendra, Jatayu and the cruel hunter (bandit Valmiki) etc. (*basata gaja gīdha byādhādi jēhi khērē*)⁵.

[⁴Had I been ‘rich’, I would have made a home for myself, but this is also not in my fate. Here, ‘resources’ refer to spiritual virtues and merits, which Tulsidas does not claim to have. Like it is difficult for a person who is not ‘rich’ to build a home for himself, Tulsidas says that he lacks the spiritual wherewithal to help him find liberation and deliverance from this mundane world of transmigration and attain an eternal state of having bliss and beatitude that is synonymous with attaining emancipation and salvation for the soul.

So he says—“If I had spiritual merits and had done noble and auspicious deeds in my life, I would have accumulated enough merit that would have entitled me to attain liberation and deliverance on my own strength. But that is not possible also for me. So like a homeless person I wander from birth to birth, and like the homeless person I am kicked around and subjected to immense misery and torments.”

⁵These creatures were very sinful, unrighteous and wayward. But they were freed of their vices and the accumulated affects of their bad deeds once they surrendered and became devotees of Lord Sri Ram. In fact, they became world renowned as the most fortunate ones.

So, Tulsidas also seeks Lord Ram's mercy for himself, and he asks the Lord to elevate him to that exalted stature that was occupied by the creatures cited in this stanza.

The reference to a 'village' is just a figure of speech to stress that Tulsidas is not alone or the only person asking Lord Sri Ram to do something for him which the Lord had not done earlier for others—i.e. give him shelter and refuge at his holy feet. This is because a 'village' is not a lonely place like an un-inhabited forest. Lord Ram had been so gracious and kind that he had extended his mercy and benevolence upon such sinful and ordinary creatures such as the elephant known as Gajendra, the vulture known as Jatau, and bandit known as Valmiki, had accepted them as his devotees and had granted them liberation and deliverance so that their souls could go to the abode of the Lord. These creatures could attain nearness with the Lord which is like living in a village of which the Lord is the Head or the Chief Guardian.

Tulsidas prays that if the Lord has established a village where he gives shelter to lowly persons, then the Lord should also admit him into it—because all those whom the Lord admitted into this village of his were no better than Tulsidas. So therefore there is no reason why Tulsidas should be denied permission and be excluded from this privilege.

If Gajendra, Jatau and Valmiki and so many others like them could be beneficiaries of Lord Ram's grace, mercy, munificence, magnanimity, benevolence, affection, kindness and benignancy, then why not Tulsidas?

The next verse no. 211 carries forward the ideas expressed in this verse no. 210.] (4).

Rām, will you.....?

(211)

कबहुँ रघुबंसमनि! सो कृपा करहुगे।
जेहि कृपा ब्याध, गज, बिप्र, खल नर तरे,
तिन्हहिं सम मानि मोहि नाथ उद्धरहुगे।।1।।
जोनि बहु जनमि किये करम खल बिबिध बिधि,
अधम आचरन कछु हृदय नहि धरहुगे।
दीनहित! अजित सरबग्य समरथ प्रनतपाल
चित मृदुल निज गुननि अनुसरहुगे।।2।।
मोह—मद—मान—कामादि खल—मंडली
सकुल निरमूल करि दुसह दुख हरहुगे।
जोग—जप—जग्य—बिग्यान ते अधिक अति,
अमल दृढ़ भगति दै परम सुख भरहुगे।।3।।
मंदजन—मौलिमनि सकल, साधन—हीन,
कुटिल मन, मलिन जिय जानि जो डरहुगे।
दासतुलसी बेद—बिदित बिरुदावली
बिमल जस नाथ! केहि भाँति बिस्तरहुगे।।4।।

(211)

kabahum' raghubansamani! sō kṛpā karahugē.
 jēhi kṛpā byādha, gaja, bipra, khala nara tarē,
 tinhahim sama māni mōhi nātha ud'dharahugē. 1.
 jōni bahu janami kiyē karama khala bibidha bidhi,
 adhama ācarana kachu hr̥daya nahi dharahugē.
 dīnahita! ajita sarabagya samaratha pranatapāla
 cita mṛdula nija gunani anusarahugē. 2.
 mōha-mada-māna-kāmādi khala-maṇḍalī
 sakula niramūla kari dusaha dukha harahugē.
 jōga-japa-jagya-bigyāna tē adhika ati,
 amala dṛṛha bhagati dai parama sukha bharahugē. 3.
 mandajana-maulimani sakala sādhana-hīna,
 kuṭila mana, malina jiya jāni jō ḍarahugē.
 dāsatusasī bēda-bidita birudāvalī
 bimala jasa nātha! kēhi bhāmṭi bistarahugē. 4.

Verse no. 211—[This verse is a natural corollary to verse no. 210. After putting forward the logical reasoning as to why Lord Ram should give shelter to Tulsidas, accept him and deliver him from his miseries, this great saint now asks the Lord—]

Oh Lord Raghubansamani (Lord Sri Ram who is like a jewel in the clan of king Raghu of Ayodhya)! Will you ever (kabahum') show the same grace, mercy and compassion on me (sō kṛpā karahugē on the strength (potent powers and influence) of which the hunter-cum-bandit (Valmiki), Gajendra (the Elephant), the Brahmin (Ajamil)¹ and many other wretched rascals and wicked ones had crossed the ocean-like mundane world (jēhi kṛpā byādha, gaja, bipra, khala nara tarē)?

Oh Lord! Will you liberate me and deliver me from my sorrows and the trap in the form of this world in which I find myself (mōhi nātha ud'dharahugē) by treating me as one of those sinners and vile ones whom you have liberated and delivered already (tinhahim sama māni). [Lord, please treat me as a sinner similar to the ones you have already liberated in the past, and therefore you should have no hesitation in giving me the same relief as you had given them.]

[¹Their stories have been narrated earlier in verse no. 57 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.] (1).

By taking birth through numerous wombs ("jōni bahu janami"; i.e. in numerous forms as different types of creatures), I have indulged in doing countless wicked deeds². (jōni -----kiyē karama khala bibidha bidhi)

Will you not mind my mischief and malfeasance, the fact of my corrupt nature and wicked behaviour (while weighing in your heart whether to accept me and grant me emancipation and salvation)³? (adhama ācarana kachu hr̥daya nahi dharahugē).

Oh Lord who is the graceful benefactor and well-wisher of the distressed, the downtrodden, the meek, the weak, the lowly, the deprived and the wretched ones (dīnahita)! Will you live up to your reputation of being (a) invincible and so powerful

that no enemy can ever subdue you (“ajita”; here meaning my enemies symbolised by my negativities and the countless vices that I have, such as passions or Kaam, anger or Krodh, attachments or Moha, greed or Lobha etc.), of being (b) aware of or knowing the thoughts of others (“sarabagya”; i.e. you must be aware about my internal evil thoughts, but at the same time of the fact that I sincerely wish to surrender before you and seek your devotion and love in my heart), of being (c) able to do everything and achieve success in all, as nothing is impossible for you (“samaratha”; i.e. it is possible for you to remove all my hurdles and cut all my fetters, and provide me with salvation, emancipation and devotion in your holy feet, and take care of my general well-being), and of being (d) committed to give protection to those who have taken refuge in your holy feet (pranatapāla), and other such countless noble and virtuous qualities—Lord, will you cheerfully and enthusiastically follow this path for which you are well known, which you have avowed to uphold consistently, and which would be in accordance with your benevolent nature and renowned reputation (because you will have to take into account your own fame and reputation while taking a decision in my matter) (cita mṛdula nija gunani anusarahugē)⁴.

[²Refer: Verse nos. 102 (stanza no. 5), 104, 109 (stanza no. 4), (stanza no. 5), 112 (stanza no. 4), 123, 136 (stanza no. 1) etc. of this book Vinai Patrika in this context.

³In verse no. 208 herein above, Tulsidas has already said that he is ashamed of his past evil deeds and sins that he had accumulated in his many previous births. But at the same time, Lord Ram is so merciful that when a distressed creature comes to him seeking refuge and merciful forgiveness, the Lord doesn’t refuse him but accepts the creature gladly, for this is the Lord’s nature and habit. This fact has been proclaimed by Lord Ram himself while accepting Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka, when he had come to the Lord for acceptance as his devotee and refugee—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Doha no. 43 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-7 precede Doha no. 48.

⁴“Oh Lord, considering your fame and noble virtues for which you are so famed and world-renowned, will you overlook or ‘wink’ at my sins, faults, vices, shortcomings etc., read what is in my mind and heart as you are all-knowing, and accept the fact that I am sincere when I say that I have come to seek refuge in your holy feet. Lord, then you will be convinced that I am not trying to deceive you when I say I have come to surrender at your holy feet and seek your devotion and love in return. Since you are all-forgiving and merciful exceedingly, I am very sure that I will be granted what wish is in my heart: which is to have devotion and love for you, as well as to get liberation and deliverance from this trap-like mundane world. Oh Lord, by your grace, my soul will find emancipation and salvation for all times to come.

Yes oh Lord, you can do it; there isn’t an iota of doubt about it. Yes, you can for sure remove the fetters that have bound and pilloried me to this world of transmigration, causing me uncountable sufferings and unsurmountable grief. It is only you who can redeem my soul!

My sins are like enemies for me, and you being an invincible Lord (**ajita**) can surely defeat them on behalf of your servant and devotee named Tulsidas.

You are all-knowing (**sarabagya**), so there is no chance I can cheat on you.

You are all-able and competent (**samaratha**), as well as the one who is morally bound to give refuge to seekers (**pranatapāla**). Therefore you can't find an excuse to refuse my petition for granting me refuge and protection from my cruel enemies and ill-fate.] (2).

Oh gracious Lord! Will you remove the intolerable sufferings and horrible torments which I am subjected to (**dusaha dukha harahugē**) by uprooting and eliminating (**"sakula niramūla kari"**; destroying, killing, ejecting, neutralising) the hordes or groups of wicked fellows (**khala-maṇḍalī**) that have firmly entrenched themselves in my heart, and causing immense consternation and vexation for me from within my own self?

These wicked fellows are the following negative traits, vices and evil tendencies that are present in my heart: (a) worldly attractions, attachments and infatuations (**mōha**); (b) haughtiness and arrogance (**mada**); (c) hypocrisy, pride, ego and vanity (**māna**); and (d) lust, passion and desire and other such wicked characters (**kāmādi**)?

What more (or better still), will you fill my heart (i.e. the place thus vacated by these rascals from my heart) with the extreme ecstasy, exceeding joy and supreme bliss (**parama sukha bharahugē**) by bestowing upon me the boon of having steady and unwavering devotion and affection of the purest kind for you (**amala dṛṛha bhagati dai**) which is more worthy, more sought after, more effective, more important and far better than (**tē adhika ati**) the boon of being successful in doing Yoga (**"jōga"**; meditation, concentration on the Lord), Japa (**"japa"**; constant recitation of Mantras), Yagya (**"jagya"**; fire and other religious sacrifices) and Vigyan (**"bigyāna"**; acquisition of knowledge and wisdom)?⁵

[⁵Put in simple words, Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to grant him 'Bhakti' which means to have devotion and affection for the Lord and refuge in his holy feet rather than success in Yoga, Japa, Yagya and Vigyan. The plain and simple reason is that all these paths are difficult to follow and full of pitfalls and obstacles, while the path of Bhakti is straightforward with no encumbrances. This fact is also endorsed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119—to Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 120.] (3).

Oh Lord, this humble servant of yours known as Tulsidas (**dāsatulasī**) says that if you feel afraid, a bit hesitant and reluctant (**jāni jō ḍarahugē**) to give succour and refuge to Tulsidas who is a humble servant of yours (**dāsatulasī**) because he is first among the wicked, the rascals, the miscreants, the lowly and the downtrodden (**mandajana-maulimani**), one who is devoid of all resources and abilities (**sakala sādhana-hīna**), whose mind is sinful, deceitful, cunning and treacherous (**kuṭila mana**), and whose heart is dark, corrupt, evil and pervert (**malina jiya**)—well oh Lord (**nātha**), then say (or think) how will you be able to spread and establish (**kēhi bhāmṭi bistarahugē**) your magnificent glory and establish your immaculate and grand reputation in the world (**"bimala jasa"**; as the Lord who forgives all the sins of

his devotees, the Lord who purifies the sinful and gives them refuge, the Lord who never turns down anyone if he comes seeking mercy and grace, and so on) that has been extolled and proclaimed so assertively even in the Vedas (the scriptures; *bēda-bidita birudāvalī*)?⁶

[⁶Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram to keep in mind the Lord's own reputation while considering Tulsidas' pleas for seeking refuge with the Lord and grant of liberation and deliverance. This is the Lord's promise that he will go out of his way to save the lowly and the sinful if they just surrender before him sincerely with a determination not to repeat their sins again, and are honestly regretful for whatever sins they already have done. The Lord would not only accept them but would take care of their future well-being in all respects.

Therefore, Tulsidas urges Lord Ram not to delay in giving his refuge in his holy feet and grant him the boon of having devotion and affection for the Lord.] (4).

Why not me.....?

Rāga Kedārā

(212)

रघुपति बिपति-दवन ।
 परम कृपालु, प्रनत-प्रतिपालक, पतित-पावन ।।1।।
 क्रूर, कुटिल, कुलहीन, दीन, अति मलिन जवन ।
 सुमिरत नाम राम पठये सब अपने भवन ।।2।।
 गज-पिंगला-अजामिल-से खल गनै धौं कवन ।
 तुलसीदास प्रभु केहि न दीन्हि गति जानकी-रवन ।।3।।

(212)

raghupati bipati-davana.

parama kṛpālu, pranata-pratipālaka, patita-pāvana. 1.

kūra, kuṭila, kulahīna, dīna, ati malina javana.

sumirata nāma rāma paṭhayē saba apanē bhavana. 2.

gaja-piṅgalā-ajāmila-sē khala ganai dhauṁ kavana.

tulasīdāsa prabhu kēhi na dīnhi gati jānakī-ravana. 3.

Verse no. 212—Sri Raghupati (Sri Ram) is the crusher (or vanquisher) of troubles, miseries and tribulations (raghupati bipati-davana).

Oh Lord, you are the most merciful, kind, munificent, benignant and compassionate Lord in this world (parama kṛpālu); you are the sustainer of those who have taken your refuge (pranata-pratipālaka), and you are the purifier of those who are sinful, evil, vile, impure, depraved, pervert and wicked (patita-pāvana) (1).

You had sent to your exalted abode (heaven—"paṭhayē saba apanē bhavana") even the outcaste man (javana)¹ who was cruel, wicked, fallen of a low caste birth, most humble and lacking in all resources, most pervert and impure (kūra, kuṭila,

kulahīna, dīna, ati malina javana) as soon as he uttered your holy name (sumirata nāma rāma).

[¹The story refers to a muslim man who was fallen, an apostate who was an unbeliever, must uncivilised and savage in his demeanours. Once it so happened that he stumbled upon a swine lying on his way and fell down. He was so shocked and astonished at this incident that he exclaimed “Oh Ram” out of dismay at his own self as well as to curse the poor animal out of disgust just before he died. But since he had uttered the holy name “RAM”, the angels of heaven came to take him there, and despite of his leading an evil life which would have condemned him to hell he was freed from this horror due to the glory of Lord Ram’s holy name.

It ought to be noted here that it is common for people who are abjectly disgusted at something to use the word ‘Ram’ as an expression of astonishment or extreme annoyance. This man had actually used this word “Ha-raam” as a swear-word to curse the swine which had inflicting mortal wound upon him which led to his death. The word “Haraam” is used as an expletive, as a cuss word to curse the offender. But fortunately it has the name of Lord Ram as its component (viz. ‘Ha’ + ‘Raam’), so as soon as this was uttered by the dying man, he got its benefit in the form of going to heaven instead of hell after death.] (2).

#Tulsidas says—“Who can count the numbers of wicked fellows, those who were evil, fallen and sinful (khala ganai dhaurṁ kavana) like Gajendra (the elephant), Pingla (the whore), Ajamil (the Brahmin) and others (gaja-piṅgalā-ajāmīla-sē), whom Lord Ram, the dear husband of Janki (jānakī-ravana), had freed from the grievous consequences of their sinful lives, and had instead given them shelter in his own obode by providing them liberation and deliverance from this world (tulasīdāsa prabhu kēhi na dīnhi gati jānakī-ravana)? [To wit, the list is a long one, but some of them are mentioned herein above.]”

{#This stanza can be read as follows also: “Who can count the numbers of wicked and fallen persons who were as sinful and evil and without any hope of freedom from their miseries as Gajendra (the elephant), Pingla (the whore), Ajamil (the Brahmin) and others were? But Tulsidas asserts that the fact is this: who has not been provided liberation and deliverance by the Lord (Sri Ram) from the bondage of this mundane existence and its accompanying chain of endless miseries, horrors, sorrows and tribulations?”}

[To wit, even the most sinful and fallen creatures are blessed by liberation and deliverance by Lord Ram and his holy name. therefore, Tulsidas wonders why shall Ram not give him liberation when he has done this with so many others in the past. In other words, Tulsidas is sure that the Lord would also bless him with liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation.] (3).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

(213)

हरि—सम आपदा—हरन ।
 नहि कोउ सहज कृपालु दुसह दुख—सागर—तरन ।।1।।
 गज निज बल अवलोकि कमल गहि गयो सरन ।
 दीन बचन सुनि चले गरुड तजि सुनाभ—धरन ।।2।।
 द्रुपदसुताको लग्यो दुसासन नगन करन ।
 'हा हरि पाहि' कहत पूरे पट बिबिध बरन ।।3।।
 इहै जानि सुर—नर—मुनि—कोबिद सेवत चरन ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु को न अभय कियो नृग—उद्धरन ।।4।।

(213)

hari-sama āpadā-harana.

nahi kō'u sahaja kṛpālu dusaha dukha-sāgara-tarana. 1.

gaja nija bala avalōki kamala gahi gayō sarana.

dīna bacana suni calē garuṛa taji sunābha-dharana. 2.

drupadasutākō lagyō dusāsana nagana karana.

'hā hari pāhi' kahata pūrē paṭa bibidha barana. 3.

ihai jāni sura-nara-muni-kōbida sēvata carana.

tulasidāsa prabhu kō na abhaya kiyō nṛga-ud'dharana. 4.

Verse no. 213—There is no one like Sri Hari (i.e. Lord Vishnu, the primary cosmic form of Lord Ram) (hari-sama -- nahi kō'u) who can remove all the troubles and tribulations of a creature (āpadā-harana), who shows mercy, kindness and compassion so easily because it is his nature, it is his temperament and character, and he does so without any obligations, without any expectation of thanks, without any coaxing, and without any fanfare (sahaja kṛpālu).

Verily indeed, the Lord is the only one who can help a creature cross the terrible ocean of intolerable and fierce sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations (dusaha dukha-sāgara-tarana)¹.

[¹In this context, refer other verses of Vinai Patrika also, such as verse nos. 101, 153-154, 162-163, 206-207 and so on.] (1).

When the Elephant (named Gajendra) realised that his strength had failed him and he was about to die (gaja nija bala avalōki), he had taken a lotus flower as an offering for you (i.e. Lord Hari, or Lord Vishnu) when he sought refuge at your holy feet (kamala gahi gayō sarana), seeking your help as a last attempt to save himself from certain death.

At that time, upon hearing his distressed call and pitiful cries for help (dīna bacana suni calē) you had abandoned your mount Garud (i.e. jumped-off it because it was too slow for you to reach the site where the Elephant needed your help on that occasion) and had dashed forward barefoot, armed only with your discus, to protect the Elephant (garuṛa taji sunābha-dharana)².

[²The story of the Elephant known as Gajendra is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'. Refer also to many other verses, for instance, verse no. 93, stanza no. 2; verse no. 217, stanza no. 2.] (2).

In view of the full royal court, when the wicked, pervert, depraved and unrighteous Dushashan started to disrobe Draupadi (*drupadasutākō lagyō dusāsana nagana karana*), then merely on her urgent, distressful and desperate words 'Alas! Hari, protect me' (*'hā hari pāhi' kahata*), you had created a mound of seamless multi-coloured cloth known as 'Sari'³ that was interminable so much so that no matter how much the wicked fellow tried to disrobe the poor lady by pulling at her Sari, the cloth never found an end (*pūrē paṭa bibidha barana*).

[³The 'Sari' is a body-wrapping length of seamless cloth that is worn by ladies in India. The wicked Dushashan wanted to vent his disdain and scorn on his cousins, the Pandvas, by making Druapadi, their wife, naked in full court. To wit, Draupadi had not even had the time to hold a flower as an offering for the Lord and make a formal prayer to him to save her. It was a split-second decision on her part to call the Lord in utter desperation. There was no time for offering of formal prayers, or making invocations or doing of rituals to seek the Lord's intervention. There was neither time for these formalities nor the time to make a second call. Even a delay of a few seconds would have resulted in Draupadi becoming naked in full public view. But oh Lord, you manifested yourself in the nick of time in the form of 'cloth that had no end', and this remarkable deed of yours saved the modesty and dignity of this poor lady. Glory to you!!

This story is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 93 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'. Refer also to verse no. 206, stanza no. 3, and verse no. 217, stanza no. 4.] (3).

Realising this extremely merciful, compassionate, considerate, benevolent and munificent nature of yours as described herein above (*ihai jāni*), all the gods, all human beings, all the great sages, hermits and ascetics, as well as those who are experts in this field prefer to worship your holy feet, revere them and have devotion for them (*sura-nara-muni-kōbida sēvata carana*).

Tulsidas says—"Who has not been made free from fears by the Lord who had made king Nrig free from all his worries, fears and consternations (*tulasidāsa prabhu kō na abhaya kiyō nrga-ud'dharana*)⁴".

[⁴King Nrig: The story of king Nrig in brief is as follows: He was a very charitable and generous king during Satyuga. He used to donate one million cows daily. It happened once that one of the donated cows went astray and came back to mix with others at his own cow-shed, and was inadvertently given in donation to another Brahmin. The first fellow went in search of his lost cow and saw her grazing amongst the cattle of the second Brahmin. Thinking that the cow had been stolen by him, the two quarrelled fiercely, and full of rancour, approached king Nrig for justice. Dumbfounded and unable to decide what to do, the king dithered and shook his head in bewilderment. Infuriated at his apparent silence, the Brahmins together cursed him to become a lizard in a well for one thousand years in Dwarka. Lord Krishna liberated him from the well and gave him freedom from that body of a lizard and curse.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Example of the Lord's grace & mercy from Lord Kṛṣṇa's life

Rāga Kalyāṇa

(214)

ऐसी कौन प्रभुकी रीति?
 बिरद हेतु पुनीत परिहरि पाँवरनि पर प्रीति ॥1॥
 गई मारन पूतना कुच कालकूट लगाइ।
 मातुकी गति दई ताहि कृपालु जादबराइ ॥2॥
 काम-मोहित गोपिकनि पर कृपा अतुलित कीन्ह।
 जगत-पिता बिरंचि जिन्हके चरनकी रज लीन्ह ॥3॥
 नेमतें सिसुपाल दिन प्रति देत गनि गनि गारि।
 कियो लीन सु आपुमें हरि राज-सभा मँझारि ॥4॥
 ब्याध चित दै चरन माख्यो मूढमति मृग जानि।
 सो सदेह स्वलोक पठयो प्रगट करि निज बानि ॥5॥
 कौन तिन्हकी कहै जिन्हके सुकृत अरु अघ दोउ।
 प्रगट पातकरूप तुलसी सरन राख्यो सोउ ॥6॥

(214)

aisī kauna prabhukī rīti?
 birada hētu punīta parihari pām̐varani para prīti. 1.
 ga'ī mārana pūtanā kuca kālakūṭa lagā'i.
 mātukī gati da'ī tāhi kṛpālu jādabarā'i. 2.
 kāma-mōhita gōpikani para kṛpā atulita kīnha.
 jagata-pitā biran̐ci jinhakē caranakī raja līnha. 3.
 nēmatēm sisupāla dina prati dēta gani gani gāri.
 kiyō līna su āpumēm hari rāja-sabhā mam̐jhāri. 4.
 byādha cita dai carana mārāiō mūrhamati mṛga jāni.
 sō sadēha svalōka paṭhayō pragaṭa kari nija bāni. 5.
 kauna tinhakī kahai jinhakē sukr̥ta aru agha dō'u.
 pragaṭa pātakarūpa tulasī sarana rākhyō sō'u. 6.

Verse no. 214—[In this verse, Tulsidas has cited a few instances from Lord Krishna's life to show how the Lord is so merciful and gracious that he not only forgives the sinners and the pervert for their misdemeanours and wickedness but also is so kind that he grants liberation and deliverance to their souls. This verse also establishes that the learned saint Tulsidas saw no difference between the Lord he revered and worshipped, i.e. Lord Ram, and Lord Krishna, because he knew that both these forms

were of the same Supreme Being who manifested himself in these two forms in different eras and under different circumstances.]

Which other Lord (except the Lord God who is represented by Sri Ram) would be inclined to (or prefers to) (aisī kauna prabhukī rīti) show more kindness towards and have greater affection for those who are lowly, impure, sinful, vile, pervert, deluded and lowborn than he overtly shows for those who are known to be good, righteous, noble and wise (punīta parihari pām̐varani para prīti) just for the sake of upholding the reputation and glory of his fame and good name (birada hētu)¹?

[¹The Lord has a glorious reputation that his holy name possesses such stupendous mystical powers that it is sufficient to provide purity to the impure, holiness to the unholy, and liberation and deliverance to those who are trapped in the cycle of transmigration with its attendant miseries and delusions.

The Lord knows well that those who have good virtues to their credit, those who have done meritorious deeds in their lives and had been righteous, noble, pure and pious would anyhow be redeemed and their souls would find liberation and deliverance simply by the virtue of their goodness and on the strength of their merit and righteousness. It is those who are lowly and sinful, those who are unfortunate as not to have accumulated any spiritual merit for themselves, those who had frittered away the golden chance their soul had been granted in the form of a human body—it is they who deserve special attention.

The Lord is the merciful Supreme Father of this extended family symbolised by this creation inhabited by multitude of creatures with wide variations in their individual characters and spiritual levels—some who grow up to rise in life and leave a good name while others who are burdens on the society and even on their selves.

Like a father who loves his children equally though he is more worried about his child who has many shortcomings and faults, such as low mental abilities and an inclination to be attracted to sinful things and go wayward in life so much as to make the father ashamed of them as compared to his other children who make the father proud of them because of their noble and righteous nature, their intelligence and auspicious thoughts, because the father knows that they would be able to stand on their own two feet in the world and take care of themselves, the Supreme Father likewise is more worried about the fate of those unfortunate creatures who have gone wayward and have fallen from their path. If the Supreme Father neglects such unfortunate children of his, then there would have no one to save them and their souls. Hence, the Lord shows more attention to them and is ready to redeem their souls when the first opportunity presents itself.

Therefore, even if these sinful, fallen and wicked creatures remember the Lord and invoke his holy name for any purpose other than for any auspicious and noble cause such as for their spiritual welfare and for worshipping the Lord, the Lord still deems it necessary to give them the benefit of doubt as well as the benefit that automatically accrues for anyone who utters his holy name and remembers him.] (1).

The demoness Putna² had tipped her breasts with poison and had gone to kill him (Lord Krishna) (gaī mārana pūtanā kuca kālākūṭa lagā'i), but the gracious and merciful Lord of the Yadav clan (i.e. Lord Krishna) granted her the exalted status of a mother (by suckling her breasts as a child, and in the process snuffing out the life from her gross body, thereby liberating her soul from the cursed body of a demoness that she possessed) (mātukī gati daī tāhi krpālu jādabarā'i).

[²The story of Putna is given in brief at the end of this verse.] (2).

You showed such unmatched grace and extreme munificence and benignance on the cow-herd maids of Vrindavan (known as Gopies) (*gōpikani para kṛpā atulita kīnha*), who were under the evil influence of ‘Kaam’ (infatuation, passion and longing for someone whom one loves too dearly) (*kāma-mōhita*), that even the Creator (the “father of creation”) Lord Brahma applied the dust of their feet on his own forehead (*jagata-pitā birañci jinhakē caranakī raja līnha*)³.

[³Having ‘Kaam’ is not a good character. It is one of the negative traits that taint the soul of a person. But the term ‘Kaam’—i.e. to have passion, love and longing—has different connotations depending upon the object to which it is applicable. If one has ‘Kaam’ for the charms and pleasures of the world and its sense objects then it acquires a negative meaning and tarnishes the soul, but if it is applied to something that is holy and divine, such as the desire for bringing one’s soul closer to the supreme Soul, the desire to worship the Lord God and have devotion for him, to have affection for the Lord and to surrender one’s self at the Lord’s holy feet, then this ‘Kaam’ acquires an aura of purity and holiness. From being something unworthy that needs to be eliminated from one’s nature and character it becomes a virtue that is well acquired.

In the case of the Gopies of Vrindavan, their love for Lord Krishna was not of a gross nature like the desire to have physical contact to arouse passions and lust that two creatures usually would have in this world, but it was a love and desire of a spiritual, ethereal and sublime nature. The Gopis lived ordinary lives, but their lives were like those of self-realised ascetics who are in ‘Samadhi’ which is a of transcendental existence.

Therefore the ‘Kaam’ that the Gopis had for Lord Krishna had a transcendental dimension to it in the sense that these Gopis remained ever engrossed in the thoughts of Lord Krishna even as they went about doing the chores of their daily lives just like a self-realised ascetic who remains lost in meditating on his enlightened ‘self’ known as the Atma and is oblivious to the affairs of the outside world even though he appears to be living like other ordinary men, albeit like those who seem to be dumb and of a low intellect as they do not respond as expected to the external stimuli from the world.

The cow-herd maids were under the evil influence of Kaam, but their closeness with Sri Krishna and their devotion for the Lord had made them highly venerated so much so that Lord Brahma, who is the eldest amongst the Gods and is regarded as the “Father of creation”, felt honoured by applying the dust of their feet on his forehead. Tulsidas means that even the lowest of the lowly and the humblest of the humble become honourable and venerable if Lord Sri Ram is benevolent, favourable and benignant upon them. Such lowly people have their sins and vices washed-off as soon as they come in contact with the Lord and remember the Lord’s holy name.] (3).

Though Sishupal⁴ had been abusing you daily and kept a count of the abuses and the insolent words, the profanities and the expletives he used for you (i.e. for Lord Krishna) (*nēmatēm sisupāla dina prati dēta gani gani gāri*)—but oh Lord Hari, you were so kind and gracious that you granted him deliverance and emancipation when his soul emerged from his gross body in the form of a splendorous shaft of light and merged in you (*kiyō līna su āpumēm hari*).

This was witnessed by all who were present in the royal assembly (during the horse-sacrifice performed by the Pandavas) where Sishupal was cursing and abusing you umteem numbers of time till his final deliverance (*rāja-sabhā mam̐jhāri*).

[⁴The story of Sishupal is narrated in brief at the end of this verse.] (4).

The stupid hunter⁵ had concentrated his thoughts upon the sole of your holy feet (*byādha cita dai carana*) as he shot (an arrow) at it, thinking it to be the face of a deer (*māraiō mūrhamati mṛga jāni*).

But (instead of showing vengeance, anger, reprisal or wrath upon him for shooting at you without any provocation) you had shown exemplary mercy, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance and munificence towards him as is your wont and inherent nature (*pragaṭa kari nija bāni*), and had sent him bodily to your own holy abode (in the heaven) instead of punishing him for this evil deed (*sō sadēha svalōka paṭhayō*).

[⁵The story of 'hunter' is narrated in brief at the end of this verse.] (5).

What can one say (i.e. there is no wonder) about such souls (or creatures) who have done righteous, auspicious and noble deeds in their lives as well as those deeds that are unrighteous, evil and ignoble (i.e. these creatures had some goodness to their credit and therefore they stood some chance, however remote, of redemption, liberation or salvation) (*kauna tinhakī kahai jinhakē sukr̥ta aru agha dō'u*)—but the wonder of all is that he (Lord Sri Ram) has kept in his care and has offered shelter in his holy feet even this wretched fellow called Tulsidas who is undoubtedly a visible embodiment of all things unrighteous and sinful, who has nothing worth the name to his credit (*pragaṭa pātakarūpa tulasī sarana rākhyō sō'u*)⁶.

[⁶To wit, this alone is sufficient to prove the Lord's extreme benevolence, grace, mercy, compassion and beneficence upon the lowly and the humble. It is surely an example of the most noble and the peerless character of Lord Ram—that he is exceedingly kind, merciful, benevolent and forgiving by nature.] (6).

[Note :- In this verse Tulsidas has equated Krishna with Lord Sri Ram. This shows that Tulsidas made no distinction between the two because he understood that the Supreme Being took different forms according the needs of the age but primarily all the forms of the Lord are one and the same.

²Demoness Putna: Putna was a celestial dancer in the court of Indra in her previous birth. Seeing the child-like Vaaman (sr. no. 64), she developed motherly affection for him and desired to make the Lord drink the milk of her bosom. Due to some curse she became the demoness Putna. Kانشa had sent her to kill Sri Krishna by making her feed milk to the child through her poisoned breasts. Krishna sucked her like a child would his mother, but in the process sucked the life out of her, thereby delivering her. In this way, Putna's desire to let the Lord suckle her milk as a child was fulfilled.

⁴Sishupal: He was the king of Chedi kingdom, and the son of a paternal aunt of Sri Krishna. He was very cruel, wicked and envious by nature. His mother had taken a promise from Krishna that her son's one hundred sins would be forgiven daily. Emboldened by this, he used to give choicest of 100 abusive epithets and used insulting, reviling words for Sri Krishna daily. Once in the court of Pandavas, he started his daily routine of expletives, but as soon as the 100 mark of profanities was passed, Krishna severed his head with his discus. Sishupal's soul emerged from him

as a shaft of effulgence and entered Sri Krishna's mouth. It is said that Sishupal was Ravana in his previous birth.

⁵The hunter Vyadh: This hunter is different from Valmiki. At the conclusion of his stay on this earth and complete elimination of the Yadu clan (due to mutual fighting), Sri Krishna was sitting under a tree with one leg crossed over the other such that his soles were vertical. A hunter thought it was the face of a deer, and shot at it with an arrow. Coming near, he realised his error and lamented. Sri Krishna told him not to repent because that was his own wish. It is said that Baali (the monkey prince who was killed by Lord Ram) was this hunter, and he had avenged Sri Ram's shooting him from a hiding during the fight between Sugriv and Baali. This incident has a moral lesson that our deeds and actions dog us even in our next birth. Sri Ram was no exception to this rule. So a creature must be careful that whatever he does in this life would be a baggage that he would have to carry forward in his next life.]

Proof of Lord Rāma's grace and benevolent nature

(215)

श्रीरघुबीरकी यह बानि ।
 नीचहू सों करत नेह सुप्रीति मन अनुमानि ॥1॥
 परम अधम निषाद पाँवर, कौन ताकी कानि?
 लियो सो उर लाइ सुत ज्यों प्रेमको पहिचानि ॥2॥
 गीध कौन दयालु, जो बिधि रच्यो हिंसा सानि?
 जनक ज्यों रघुनाथ ताकहँ दियो जल निज पानि ॥3॥
 प्रकृति-मलिन कुजाति सबरी सकल अवगुन-खानि ।
 खात ताके दिये फल अति रुचि बखानि बखानि ॥4॥
 रजनिचर अरु रिपु बिभीषन सरन आयो जानि ।
 भरत ज्यों उठि ताहि भेंटत देह-दसा भुलानि ॥5॥
 कौन सुभग सुसील बानर, जिनहिं सुमिरत हानि ।
 किये ते सब सखा, पूजे भवन अपने आनि ॥6॥
 राम सहज कृपालु कोमल दीनहित दिनदानि ।
 भजहि ऐसे प्रभुहि तुलसी कुटिल कपट न ठानि ॥7॥

(215)

śrīraghubīrakī yaha bāni.

nīcahū sōm karata nēha suprīti mana anumāni. 1.
 parama adhama niṣāda pāmvara, kauna tākī kāni?
 liyō sō ura lā'i suta jyōm prēmako pahicāni. 2.
 gīdha kauna dayālu, jō bidhi racyō hinsā sāni?
 janaka jyōm raghunātha tākaham diyō jala nija pāni. 3.
 prakṛti-malina kujāti sabarī sakala avaguna-khāni.
 khāta tākē diyē phala ati ruci bakhāni bakhāni. 4.
 rajanicara aru ripu bibhīṣana sarana āyō jāni.
 bharata jyōm uṭhi tāhi bhēṇṭata dēha-dasā bhulāni. 5.
 kauna subhaga susīla bānara, jinahim sumirata hāni.
 kiye tē saba sakhā, pūjē bhavana apanē āni. 6.

rāma sahaja kṛpālu kōmala dīnahita dinadāni.
bhajahi aisē prabhuhi tulasī kuṭila kapaṭa na ṭhāni. 7.

Verse no. 215—It is a promise and a solemn declaration of Sri Raghubir (Lord Ram) (śrīraghubīrakī yaha bāni) that it is his genuine nature and a well-established habit that he would show selfless affection, love and grace even to those who are lowly, wicked, wretched and lowborn (nīcahū sōm karata nēha) if he finds or realizes that these creatures have true, pure and abiding devotion for the Lord (suprīti mana anumāni)¹.

[¹There are many verses in Vinai Patrika which lay stress on this great virtue and benevolent attitude of Lord Ram. For instance, refer to verse nos. 152, 166 amongst others.

It ought to be noted here that the basic premise on which one can surely expect Lord Ram to show his mercy upon him is to have sincere affection and true devotion for the Lord. The creature must remember and be aware that he must not try tricks and deceit with the Lord as that would be counter productive and ruinous for him—because the Lord is all-knowing, and nothing is hidden from his knowledge. Though the Lord is exemplarily merciful and gracious and forgiving, but he does not like anyone playing tricks with him.

To wit, the Lord seeks only the quality of affection and devotion in the heart of his devotees as a criterion for extending his grace upon them, and nothing else. It does not matter to him if the person is of a high birth or not, if he is pure or impure, if he has done meritorious deeds or is sinful. After all, the Lord is there to take care of the humblest, those who are without any resources and wherewithal for obtaining liberation and deliverance for their souls. It is those who are fallen and sinful that deserve special attention from the Lord as has been reiterated repeatedly in this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’. For instance, refer verse nos. 210-212.] (1).

(Here is the proof :-) Guha-Nishad (of the boatman community) was extremely lowly, wretched and sinful (parama adhama niṣāda pāmvara). What dignity and stature did he have that would make him eligible for any consideration and respect (kauna tākī kāni)?

But the Lord embraced him like he were his own son (liyō sō ura lā'i suta jyōm) upon realising that Guha had true, pure and abiding love and devotion for him (prēmako pahicāni)².

[²Refer verse no. 152, stanza no. 7 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (2).

The vulture Jatau, whom the creator Brahma had destined to be cruel and a violent meat-eating bird (jō bidhi racyō hinsā sāni)—where was he merciful or compassionate (gīdha kauna dayālu)?

But Sri Raghunātha (Lord Ram) gave oblations to his soul and performed his last rites with his own hands (tākaham diyō jala nija pāni) as if he (Jatau) were his own father (janaka jyōm raghunātha)³.

[³Refer also to verse no. 152, stanza no. 8; verse no. 180, stanza no. 6; verse no. 183, stanza no. 2; verse no. 191, stanza no. 6 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (3).

Sabari was, by natural temperament and birth, impure, corrupt, evil and sinful, was of a low birth (being a tribal woman), and a mine of all possible unrighteousness and

imperfect characters (and was castigated by the society for these reasons) (*prakṛti-malina kujāti sabarī sakala avaguna-khāni*).

But (realising that she had true, pure and abiding devotion for you), you (Lord Sri Ram) had cheerfully and willingly enjoyed eating the plums offered to you by her own hands (inspite of the established tradition that one ought not to accept anything that is offered as food by anyone who is an out-caste and of a low birth as Sabari was) (*khāta tākē diyē phala ati ruci*).

Not only this, but you had also repeatedly praised the sweetness and delicious taste of these plums (though they were actually sour—just to show your respect for Sabari, to make her feel happy that you had enjoyed her offerings, and to acknowledge her love and devotion for you) (*bakhāni bakhāni*)⁴.

[⁴Refer also to verse no. 152, stanza no. 8; verse no. 162, stanza no. 2; verse no. 183, stanza no. 2; verse no. 191, stanza no. 6 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (4).

When Vibhishan had come to you to surrender himself before you and seek your refuge (*sarana āyō jāni*), then inspite of being aware that he was a demon and a brother of your enemy (Ravana, the king of Lanka) (*rajanicara aru ripu bibhīṣana*), you had immediately got up to welcome him most cheerfully and without reservations (*uṭhi tāhi bhēṇṭata*).

When he prostrated before you, you had immediately lifted him and most affectionately embraced him as if he was your own brother Bharat (*bharata jyōm*), and in that emotional instant you had lost consciousness (or awareness) of your own self (*dēha-dasā bhulāni*)⁵.

[To wit, at the time of warmly welcoming and embracing Vibhishan you had become extremely thrilled and overwhelmed with joy as if you were meeting your own brother Bharat whom you loved exceedingly. You had all but forgotten that you were embracing a demon, a member of a race who were your avowed enemies, that his brother Ravana had abducted your wife Sita and had been wrecking havoc on the earth and tormenting the sages and saints, the primary reasons why you had to come down on earth as a human being.

The fact that Lord Ram had embraced Vibhishan irrespective of the fact that he was a brother of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka who was the Lord’s enemy, is also stressed in verse no. 166, stanza no. 8.] (5).

What good, noble and virtuous temperament or character did the monkeys possess, what good and civil manners did they have, or what nice behaviour did they ever exhibit (that you chose to show favour to them, make them your friends and comrade-in-arms) (*kauna subhaga susīla bānara*)? [To wit, the monkeys were very lowly by birth and way down in the hierarchy of creation, and by no stretch of imagination could they ever match you in any way at all. But still you decided to show them respect and favour by accepting them as your friends.]

These monkeys who are deemed to be so lowly, impure and sinful that the mere utterance of their names is not regarded in high esteem by anyone (i.e. no one would like to say that a ‘monkey is his friend’; no one would invoke them during any auspicious moment as their remembrance is considered more harmful than of being any good to the speaker) (*jinahim sumirata hāni*)—verily, such lowly creatures were made friends by you (*kiyē tē saba sakhā*) so much so that you brought them all home (to Ayodhya), showed them the greatest of courtesy and honour, and had

extended a warm welcome to all of them (“pūjē bhavana apanē āni” as if they were your fast friends and special guests-of-honour --kiyē tē saba sakhā)⁶.

[⁶Refer: Vinai Patrika, verse no. 164, stanza no. 5; verse no. 166, stanza no. 9; verse no. 193, stanza no. 5.

When Lord Ram returned home to Ayodhya at the end of his forest sojourn and after the victory at Lanka, he had brought the chief of the monkeys home with him as his special guests. This has been narrated in detail in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 118 along with Chaupai line no. 1 that follows it; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precedes Doha no. 8.] (6).

(All these incidents cited above prove that :-) Lord Sri Ram is most merciful, compassionate, munificent, gracious and obliging by nature (rāma sahaja kṛpālu), he has a very soft, malleable and sweet heart that is easily moved with pity for others who are suffering as he is, by temperament, most benevolent, beneficent, benignant and affable (kōmala), is a dearest benefactor and a well-wisher of the poor, the impoverished, the humble, the lowly and the downtrodden (dīnahita), and he is a gracious, magnanimous, liberal, selfless and unpretentious donor and bestower of boons and grace upon all (dinadāni).

Hence, oh Tulsidas, you should abandon all forms of deceit, falsehood, pretension, crookedness and wickedness from your mind and heart (and clean them of all such impurities) (tulasī kuṭila kapaṭa na ṭhāni). Instead of wasting your time and energy in these worthless activities, you must worship such a gracious and benevolent Lord as Sri Ram whose glories have been described hereinbefore; you must develop true devotion and deep love for Lord Ram who is so gracious and benign as narrated hereinbefore (bhajahi aisē prabhuhī) (7).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

All Gods are selfish except Lord Harī (Viṣṇu; Rāma)

(216)

हरि तजि और भजिये काहि?
 नाहिनै कोउ राम सो ममता प्रनत पर जाहि ।।1।।
 कनककसिपु बिरंचिको जन करम मन अरु बात ।
 सुतहिं दुखवत बिधि न बरज्यो कालके घर जात ।।2।।
 संभु—सेवक जान जग, बहु बार दिये दस सीस ।
 करत राम—बिरोध सो सपनेहु न हटक्यो ईस ।।3।।
 और देवनकी कहा कहाँ, स्वारथहिके मीत ।
 कबहु काहु न राखि लियो कोउ सरन गयउ सभीत ।।4।।
 को न सेवत देत संपति लोकहू यह रीति ।
 दासतुलसी दीनपर एक राम ही की प्रीति ।।5।।

(216)

hari taji aura bhajiyē kāhi?
 nāhinai kō'u rāma sō mamatā pranata para jāhi. 1.
 kanakakasipu birañcikō jana karama mana aru bāta.
 sutahim dukhavata bidhi na barajyō kālakē ghara jāta. 2.
 sambhu-sēvaka jāna jaga, bahu bāra diyē dasa sīsa.
 karata rāma-birōdha sō sapanēhu na haṭakyō īsa. 3.
 aura dēnvanakī kahā kahaurṁ, svārathahikē mīta.
 kabahu kāhu na rākhi liyō kō'u sarana gaya'u sabhīta. 4.
 kō na sēvata dēta sampati lōkahū yaha rīti.
 dāsatusasī dīnapara ēka rāma hī kī prīti. 5.

Verse no. 216—Whom should we worship and revere, whom should we have devotion, faith and affection for besides the Lord God known as Sri Hari (a reference to Lord Vishnu who had manifested in the form of Sri Ram) (hari taji aura bhajiyē kāhi)?

There is no other God or Lord except Lord Sri Ram who has such compassion, mercy, affection and concern (nāhinai kō'u rāma sō mamatā) for those refugees who are wretched, humble, meek and lowly, and have come to seek his protection and shelter (pranata para jāhi) (1).

(Here is the proof of what has been said above :-) The demon Hiranyakashipu was an ardent devotee of Brahma, the Creator (kanakakasipu birañcikō jana), and he was very faithful to the latter and fully committed to serving him by his deeds, his mind and heart, and by his speech (karama mana aru bāta).

But Brahma did not caution him against tormenting his own son (Pralad who was a devotee of Lord Hari) (sutahim dukhavata bidhi na barajyō), that such evil behaviour would surely condemn the demon to hell (though Brahma knew fully well that these evil deeds of the demon would invariably lead him to hell) (kālakē ghara jāta)¹.

[¹To wit, though the Creator Brahma knew that the sinful way his devotee, the demon Hiranyakashipu, was behaving by unnecessarily tormenting an innocent child named Prahalad, who was his son and a devotee of Lord Hari, would surely cause the demon to go to hell, the Creator never warned him to stop his evil ways. This proves that Brahma was only interested in receiving offerings made to him by the demon Hiranyakashipu, and was the least concerned about the latter's welfare and destiny; he was not concerned that his devotee would go to hell because of his evil deeds of tormenting an innocent child.

Had Brahma warned the demon not to torment Prahalad as he would be severely punished for his misdeeds, the latter most probably would have mended his ways and escaped being condemned to hell. But Brahma did not do so. It so happened that when the demon finally decided to kill his own son by tying him to a pillar and drew his sword to cut-off the child's head, Lord Hari manifested himself as Lord Nrsingh—one half as human and one half as lion—to immediately kill the demon and release Prahalad from the rope which tied him. This story is narrated in brief as a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.] (2).

Similarly, the world knows that the demon king Ravana was Lord Shiva's great devotee (*sambhu-sēvaka jāna jaga*) and had severed his heads ten times to offer them to the Lord (*bahu bāra diyē dasa sīsa*).

But when he created enmity with Lord Sri Ram (*karata rāma-birōdha sō*), Shiva did not even think in his dreams of stopping him from digging his own grave by becoming inimical to Lord Ram (*sapanēhu na haṭakyō īsa*). [Had Shiva cautioned Ravana then perhaps the latter would have made peace with Lord Ram and averted the war that lead to his ultimate death.] (3).

(When this is the state of affairs with these two senior Gods such as Brahma, the Creator, and Shiva, the Annihilator, then—) What to talk of other Gods (*aura dēnvanakī kahā kahauṁ*)! All of them are only self-serving or selfish friends (*svārathahikē mīta*)².

None of them have ever protected and given refuge and shelter to those who are frightened, desperate and distressed (*kabahu kāhu na rākhi liyō kō'u sarana gaya'u sabhīta*).

[²Refer verse no. 145, stanza no. 6; verse no. 163, stanza no. 2; verse no. 191, stanza no. 1 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.

Refer also to "Ram Charit Manas", Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 110 in this context.] (4).

Who does not give money or wealth (in the way of a remuneration, a reward or a tip) on being served and being pleased by such service (*kō na sēvata dēta sampati*)? This is the normal way and the tradition with the world (*lōkahū yaha rīti*).

But oh Tulsidas, it is only Lord Sri Ram who has affection and compassion for those who are poor, impoverished, wretched, lowly, distressed, humble and meek, those who are virtually helpless and without any resources or merit to their credit (that would likely kindle interest in the Lords and Masters who expect some kind of offering or gift from those who have come to them seeking some kind of favour, such as some boon or grant of some largesse and reward) (*dāsatulasī dīnapara ēka rāma hī kī prīti*). [To wit, Lord Ram accepts such creatures immediately on their surrendering themselves at his feet, and the Lord does not expect anything from them in return for granting them fearlessness and protection.]³

[³Refer also to verse no. 236 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.] (5).

Lord Rāma is the sole benefactor and a well-wisher of all creatures

(Tulasīdāsa will seek shelter nowhere else)

(217)

जो पै दूसरो कोउ होइ ।

तौ हौं बारहि बार प्रभु कत दुख सुनावौं रोइ ॥ १ ॥

काहि ममता दीनपर, काको पतितपावन नाम ।

पापमूल अजामिलहि केहि दियो अपनो धाम ।।2।।
 रहे संभु बिरंचि सुरपति लोकपाल अनेक ।
 सोक—सरि बूडत करीसहि दई काहु न टेक ।।3।।
 बिपुल—भूपति—सदसिमहँ नर—नारि कह्यो 'प्रभु पाहि' ।
 सकल समरथ रहे, काहु न बसन दीन्हों ताहि ।।4।।
 एक मुख क्यों कहौं करुनासिंधु के गुन—गाथ?
 भक्तहित धरि देह काह न कियो कोसलनाथ ।।5।।
 आपसे कहूँ सौँपिये मोहि जो पै अतिहि घिनात ।
 दासतुलसी और बिधि क्यों चरन परिहरि जात ।।6।।

(217)

jō pai dūsarō kō'u hō'i.
 tau hauṁ bārahi bāra prabhu kata dukha sunāvaum rō'i. 1.
 kāhi mamatā dīnapara, kākō patitapāvana nāma.
 pāpamūla ajāmilahi kēhi diyō apanō dhāma. 2.
 rahē sambhu birañci surapati lōkapāla anēka.
 sōka-sari būrata karīsahi da'ī kāhu na ṭēka. 3.
 bipula-bhūpati-sadasimaham' nara-nāri kahyō 'prabhu pāhi'.
 sakala samaratha rahē, kāhu na basana dīnhōm tāhi. 4.
 ēka mukha kyōm kahaurm karunāsindhu kē guna-gātha?
 bhaktahita dhari dēha kāha na kiyō kōsalanātha. 5.
 āpasē kahum' saumpiyē mōhi jō pai atihi ghināta.
 dāsatulāsī aura bidhi kyōm carana parihari jāta. 6.

Verse no. 217—Oh Lord Sri Ram (prabhu)! If I did have someone else who would have listened to my woes and would have been gracious enough to give me refuge in his feet (jō pai dūsarō kō'u hō'i), why would I have repeatedly wept and told you about my miseries, agonies, sorrows, troubles and tribulations (and unnecessarily bother and annoy you)? (tau hauṁ bārahi bāra prabhu kata dukha sunāvaum rō'i)¹.

[¹“To wit oh Lord, I do it because there is no other Lord in this world who would listen to me, and give me his protection as well as an assurance of succour and solace.”

There are many verses spread throughout the text of Vinai Patrika which emphasise this fact, some instances in this context being verse no. 84, stanza no. 4; verse no. 99, stanza no. 1; verse no. 139, stanza no. 12; verse no. 160, stanza no. 1; verse no. 210, stanza no. 1; verse no. 213, stanza no. 1; verse no. 216, stanza no. 1.] (1).

Besides you oh Lord, who else has affection and compassion for those who are miserable, distressed, weak, humble and without any resources (kāhi mamatā dīnapara); and whose name is renowned as the one who “makes those who are impure, corrupt, vile, sinful and defiled as the ones who are praiseworthy, meritorious, pure, pious and holy” (kākō patitapāvana nāma)?

And say, who had given the sinful and the most evil person named Ajamil (pāpamūla ajāmilahi) his own exalted abode in the heaven (kēhi diyō apanō

dhāma) (simply because he had called out the name of his son, “Narain”, which also happened to be your own divine name, at the time of his death)². [Surely oh Lord Ram, except you such a noble hearted, benevolent, magnanimous, gracious, kind and merciful Lord is no where to be found.]

[²The story of ‘Ajamil’ and how he was saved by uttering the holy and divine name of Lord Narain is described in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (2).

There were many Lords and Guardians/Custodians of the world known as ‘Lokpals’ (rahē -- lōkapāla anēka) such as Shiva, Brahma, Indra³ etc. (sambhu biranīci surapati), but when the elephant king known as ‘Gajaraaj’ was in utter distress and virtually drowning in the river of hopelessness and sorrows (when he was about to die when a huge crocodile caught hold of his legs and started dragging him into the river) (sōka-sari būrata karīsahi), no one came forward to extend help and protect him at that time (daī kāhu na tēka)⁴.

[Oh Lord it was only you who rushed to save Gajaraaj at that crucial moment of his life, and in the hurry to reach the site you had even abandoned your mount Garuda because he was too slow for the occasion; you had dashed forward barefoot to save the elephant king from a horrifying death. Say, which of the Lords and Gods would one treat as being more worthy of praise and worship after one has read this story: surely it is you, Lord Ram, for no one would like to praise any other Lord or God who hadn’t worried or bothered to come to the aid of and save the elephant king when he needed help the most. What is the use of wasting one’s energy and time and resources in offering worship to such Lords and Gods who expect that the creature would make offerings and pay obeisance to them with devotion and loyalty, but not bothering about the same loyal and devout creature when he is in distress and need their help?]⁴

[³‘Shiva’ and ‘Brahma’ are the two senior-most Gods of creation and members of the Trinity of Gods, the third God being Lord Vishnu whose name is ‘Narain’, and who had manifested as Lord Ram.

‘Indra’ is the King of all the other junior Gods.

⁴The story of ‘Gajaraaj’ is narrated in brief in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (3).

In the assembly where many able and strong warrior kings were present (bipula-bhūpati-sadasimaham), when Arjun's wife ‘Draupadi’ (nara-nāri) cried out in exasperation and distress (when Dushasan was trying to violate her modesty and dignity by attempting to disrobe her in full view of the court), “Oh Lord, save me; I surrender before you!” (kahyō ‘prabhu pāhi’)—at that time, everyone present there was amply able and potent enough to protect her if they had wanted (sakala samaratha rahē), but no one dared to save her and give her clothes to cover herself up (kāhu na basana dīnhōm tāhi).

[When the Kaurav king named Dushasan tried to un-clothe Draupadi and started pulling off the Sari, the body-wrapping garment worn by women in India, from her body, she had pleaded with everyone present to save her. Even her own husbands, the Pandavas, remained silent and sitting with bowed heads, and none in the assembly stood up to help her. Draupadi did her best to clutch the length of cloth known as Sari but she was no match for the powerful arms of Dushasan. When the

Sari was at its fag end and one more pull would have completely disrobed her, Draupadi stopped all resistance and let it go.

She made one final prayer to the Lord: she held her hands towards the heaven and cried out to Lord Krishna for help. Instantly and most magically at that moment, the Lord assumed the form of a ‘Sari’ and wound himself around Draupadi. The miraculous effect was that Dushasan’s hands got tired of pulling and pulling off the Sari from Draupadi’s body so much so that a mountain of cloth was formed on the ground, but the cloth never had an end! This astonishing event that is unparalleled in the realm of ancient history helped save the dignity, the self-respect and the modesty of this poor, helpless and hapless lady Draupadi.]⁵

[⁵Draupadi’s story is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 93 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’. Refer also to verse no. 206, stanza no. 3; and verse no. 213, stanza no. 3.] (4).

Oh an ocean of mercy (karunāsindhu)! How can I ever narrate with a single mouth (ēka mukha kyōm kahaum) the long list of your legendary glories that are contained in the countless divine and holy stories related to you, stories that are full of the innumerable noble deeds of mercy, compassion, kindness, munificence and benevolence that you have done (kē guna-gātha)?

Oh Lord of Kaushal (i.e. Lord Ram, the king of Ayodhya—“kōsalanātha”)! By manifesting yourself in uncountable forms for the benefit of your devotees (bhaktahita dhari dēha), which noble, marvellous, magnificent and matchless deed have you not done (kāha na kiyō)?

[To wit, you have done everything possible to help your devotees and those who have surrendered themselves to you, seeking your protection and mercy. You have gone to every extent, you have even gone out of your way, and you have left no stone unturned for the sake of welfare, well-being, goodness and happiness of your devotees. You have done even the unimaginable for the benefit of your devotees—like in this case when you had become a ‘cloth’ to save Draupadi!] (5).

[In this stanza, Tulsidas lovingly and politely chides his beloved Lord Ram by saying—] ‘Oh Lord, if you really are fed-up with me (or detest me) (jō pai atihi ghināta), then hand me over to someone who is equivalent in nature, character, temperament and behaviour to you (āpasē kahum saumpiyē mōhi).

Otherwise, why should—and why would—this servant of yours named Tulsidas go anywhere else; why should he not remain at your holy feet (if you can’t advise him to go anywhere else) (dāsatulasī aura bidhi kyōm carana parihari jāta)?”⁶

[⁶Tulsidas says that he shall not go anywhere else, at any cost, for the simple reason that there is no one who is as kind, merciful and gracious as Lord Sri Ram is. Tulsidas is confident that the Lord will forgive him for his stubbornness and audacity, and by-and-by he (Tulsidas) would be successful in persuading the Lord to accept him at his holy feet as one of his devotees and servants. This would ensure Tulsidas’ deliverance, emancipation and salvation.] (6).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram’s mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

The Holy Feet of Lord Śrī Rāma

(218)

कबहिं देखाइहौ हरि चरन ।
 समन सकल कलेस कलि—मल, सकल मंगल—करन ॥1॥
 सरद—भाव सुंदर तरुनतर अरुन—बारिज बरन ।
 लच्छि—लालित ललित करतल छबि अनूपम धरन ॥2॥
 गंग—जनक अनंग—अरि—प्रिय कपट—बटु बलि—छरन ।
 बिप्रतिय नृग बधिकके दुख—दोस दारुन दरन ॥3॥
 सिद्ध—सुर—मुनि—बृंद—बंदित सुखद सब कहँ सरन ।
 सकृत् उर आनत जिनहिं जन होत तारन—तरन ॥4॥
 कृपासिंधु सुजान रघुबर प्रनत—आरति—हरन ।
 दरस—आस—पियास तुलसीदास चाहत मरन ॥5॥

(218)

kabahiṁ dēkhā'ihau hari carana.
 samana sakala kalēsa kali-mala, sakala maṅgala-karana. 1.
 sarada-bhāva sundara tarunatarā aruna-bārija barana.
 lacchi-lālita lalita karatala chabi anūpama dharana. 2.
 gaṅga-janaka anaṅga-ari-priya kapaṭa-baṭu bali-charana.
 bipratiya nṛga badhikakē dukha-dōsa dārūna darana. 3.
 sid'dha-sura-muni-br̥nda-bandita sukhada saba kaham̐ sarana.
 sakṛta ura ānata jinahiṁ jana hōta tārana-tarana. 4.
 kṛpāsindhu sujāna raghubara pranata-ārati-harana.
 darasa-āsa-piyāsa tulasīdāsa cāhata marana. 5.

Verse no. 218—Oh Hari (Lord Ram)! Will you ever be kind enough and sufficiently pleased with me to let me have Darshan (divine, sacred or holy viewing) of your divine and holy feet (kabahiṁ dēkhā'ihau hari carana) which are the eliminators or destroyers of all sorrows, miseries, agonies, troubles and tribulations that torment me, which also are able to vanquish the negative effects of all the sins, evils, vices and faults that are characteristic of Kaliyug (samana sakala kalēsa kali-mala).

At the same time, your holy feet are provide all sorts of auspiciousness, goodness, righteousness, welfare and well-being for a creature (sakala maṅgala-karana) (1).

The colour of those holy feet are as magnificent and beautifully as the red or pink hued (aruna-bārija barana) lotus flower that has freshly opened its petals during the winter season (sarada-bhāva sundara tarunatarā).

These holy feet are reverentially pressed by goddess Laxmi by her tender palms (lacchi-lālita lalita karatala)¹, and they are of peerless magnificence, beauty and radiance (chabi anūpama dharana).

[¹Goddess Laxmi is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu. She lovingly serves the Lord and presses or massages his divine feet as a means of doing service to the Lord.] (2).

These holy feet (of Lord Vishnu who had manifested in the form of Lord Sri Ram) are known as the ‘father of river Ganges’ (“gaṅga-janaka”; so-called because this holy river has emerged from the toe of the feet of Vishnu, hence the feet are called the ‘father’ of the river)².

They are dear to Lord Shiva who had turned Kamdeo (the patron God of passion, cupid and love) to ashes (anaṅga-ari-priya)³.

They are the ones which had deceived king Bali in the disguise of a Brahmachari (kapaṭa-baṭu bali-charana). [This refers to the incident when Lord Vishnu had assumed the form of a dwarf mendicant known as Vaaman, and had stopped Bali from acquiring lordship over the whole creation as it would have upset the laws of creation whereby no mortal being can assume the role of a God.]⁴

These holy feet of yours are indeed the ones that had removed all the sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations as well as the terrible sins, evils, faults and vices that had dogged and tormented (dukha-dōsa dāruna darana) Ahilya, the wife of the Brahmin (sage Gautam)⁵, as also of king Nriga⁶, and the wicked and cruel fellow named Nishad (bipratiya nṛga badhikakē)⁷.

[²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 211 where Ahilya had reiterated this fact when she prayed to Lord Ram.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 87 where it is mentioned that Shiva had burnt Kamdeo to ashes; and Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108 where it is mentioned that Shiva constantly worships Lord Ram and repeats the Lord’s holy name.

⁴This has been narrated in a note appended to verse no. 52, and verse no. 174, stanza no. 2 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.

⁵Ahilya’s story is narrated in brief as a note appended to verse no. 43, stanza no. 3 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.

⁶King Nrig’s story is narrated in brief as a note appended to verse no. 213, stanza no. 4 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.

⁷Nishad’s story is narrated in brief as a note appended to verse no. 134, stanza no. 4 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (3).

These holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram) are being consistently praised and adored by the community of Siddhas (the mystics), the Gods and the exalted hermits and sages (sid’dha-sura-muni-br̥nda-bandita).

They grant happiness, succour and solace as well as refuge and shelter to all and sundry who come seeking for them before the Lord (sukhada saba kham̐ sarana).

That devotee who remembers these holy feet of the Lord as well as his divine glories even once in his heart (sakṛta ura ānata jinahim jana), then he becomes so blessed and mystically empowered that he is not only able to attain liberation and deliverance for himself but can also share these rewards with others who come in contact with him (hōta tārana-tarana).

[To wit, such devotees who worship the holy feet of the Lord and enshrine them in his heart not only become eligible to cross this ocean-like mundane world himself but also entitled to share this benefit with others. and becomes eligible and capable of helping others to cross it by bringing the virtuous, noble and righteous glories of those feet in his heart.] (4).

Oh Raghubara (Lord Ram), you are an ocean of mercy and compassion (krpāsindhu), and is the wisest, the most gracious and gentlemanly (sujāna)!

You are the remover of all sorrows, miseries, agonies, trials and tribulations that torment those who have taken refuge in your holy feet (pranata-ārati-harana).

This Tulsidas is now dying of thirst (tulasīdāsa cāhata marana) in the form of hope and expectation that he would be granted an opportunity to have a Darshan (divine sight or view) of your august and holy feet; he is very sincerely and eagerly hoping for it (darasa-āsa-piyāsa) (5).

Why should one pray before the Lord

(219)

द्वार हौं भोर ही को आजु ।
 रटत रिरिहा आरि और न, कौर ही तें काजु ।।1।।
 कलि कराल दुकाल दारुन, सब कुभाँति कुसाजु ।
 नीच जन, मन ऊँच, जैसी कोढ़मेंकी खाजु ।।2।।
 हहरि हियमें सदय बूझ्यो जाइ साधु—समाजु ।
 मोहुसे कहूँ कतहुँ कोउ, तिन्ह कह्यो कोसलराजु ।।3।।
 दीनता—दारिद दलै को कृपाबारिधि बाजु ।
 दानि दसरथरायके, तू बानइत सिरताजु ।।4।।
 जनमको भूखो भिखारी हौं गरीबनिवाजु ।
 पेट भरि तुलसिहि जेँवाइय भगति—सुधा सुनाजु ।।5।।

(219)

dvāra hauṁ bhōra hī kō āju.
 raṭata ririhā āri aura na, kaura hī tēm kāju. 1.
 kalī karāla dukāla dārūna, saba kubhāmṭi kusāju.
 nīca jana, mana ūm̐ca, jaisī kōṛhamēṅkī khāju. 2.
 hahari hiyamēm sadaya būjhaīō jā'i sādhu-samāju.
 mōhusē kahum̐ katahum̐ kō'u, tinha kahyō kōsalarāju. 3.
 dīnatā-dārida dalai kō krpābāridhi bāju.
 dāni dasaratharāyakē, tū bāna'ita siratāju. 4.
 janamakō bhūkhō bhikhārī hauṁ garībanivāju.
 pēṭa bhari tulasīhi jēnvā'iya bhagati-sudhā sunāju. 5.

Verse no. 219—Oh Lord (Ram), since early morning today I have been squatting in front of your doorway (dvāra hauṁ bhōra hī kō āju). I have been requesting, beseeching, entreating and pleading before you most earnestly and urgently (raṭata ririhā āri); I want nothing more from you except some small bit of alms such as a single bite or morsel (of food) (aura na, kaura hī tēm kāju)!¹

[¹Like all great poets and bards who liberally employ parables, metaphors and similes to describe something of great importance and drive home a point, Tulsidas here invokes the scenario where a beggar or a very hungry person waits patiently at

the door of a great Lord since early morning in the hope that the latter would be kind enough to grant him some sort of alms and food. This seeker is sure that the Lord can't, and won't, turn him away for fear of getting a bad name and ignominy as he would be very conscious of his own reputation and what the world would say about him when it learns that he had refused even the basic norms of goodness and noble behaviour if he shoos the seeker away empty-handed the first thing in the morning.

Now, 'morsels or bite of food' and 'bits of alms' are simply figures of speech to imply that Tulsidas does not want his dear and benevolent Lord Ram to give him some great spiritual reward, such as emancipation and salvation; what he wants is just a simple 'glance' by the Lord towards him, because he knows that this gesture would mean that the Lord has seen him, even though it is for a fleeting moment, but it is enough for fulfilling all the desires of Tulsidas. The reason is that the Lord is extremely kind, considerate, merciful and gracious, and as soon as his sight falls on the wretched and pitiable condition of Tulsidas, the Lord would immediately take cognizance of it and take steps to mitigate Tulsidas' sufferings.] (1).

[Now, if you wonder why I am so lazy that I don't make any effort to meet my basic needs in this world, which has resulted in me being so impoverished that I come begging for bits of things and morsels of food at your door, then oh kind Lord, this is my answer:--]

In this terrible, merciless, selfish and cruel period called Kaliyug, there is a severe dearth of good, noble and righteous means and ways that would help a creature realise his spiritual dreams and fulfil his wishes (for peace, happiness, liberation and deliverance from sorrows, grief, worries, miseries and torments of all kinds) (*kali karāla dukāla dāruna*).

Whatever ways and means that are available have all become mired in corruptions, are influenced by evil, and are soaked in all forms of negativities. Therefore, employing any method to fulfil one's spiritual aspirations and attain one's noble objectives in life have become an impossibility (*saba kubhāṁṭi kusāju*).

People have set high and noble goals for themselves in their lives, but they are all fallen and sinful, they are all full of vices and evil, and their deeds and actions that would enable them to attain their goals are all unrighteous, pervert, degrading and corrupt. So, how can one expect good results? (*nīca jana, mana ūmā*)

People try many methods, do countless deeds and make strenuous efforts so that their desires and needs are fulfilled, such as having peace and happiness in this world, but all their efforts to get relief and solace are like scratching the itch of leprosy because the more a person scratches the more severe the itch becomes and the more sore the wound gets (*jaisī kōṛhamēṅkī khāju*).

[Even though scratching the rash of leprosy appears very relieving, pleasing and comfortable in the beginning, but the scratching only intensifies the itch and aggravates the wound so much so that it starts to fester and ooze pus. Similarly, when a creature pursues the sense objects of the material world in the hope of deriving comfort and happiness in them, in the beginning they appear very tempting and pleasant but soon the creature realises that it he has opened a can of worms for himself as his miseries and griefs go on enhancing incrementally. All the things of this world only add to one's miseries, sorrows and troubles instead of giving him peace and happiness. So Tulsidas says he decided to avoid them altogether.

To wit, the more the creature pursues the world in the hope of finding comfort and happiness and peace in it, the more miserable and wretched he feels. Ultimately

he lands in a state where he is worse off than when he had begun to seek peace and happiness in this world.]²

[²“Therefore, oh Lord, I determined for myself that it is far better for me not to take the risk by getting entangled in dirty things of this world and doing wrong deeds in the hope of achieving success in life, in the hope of attaining my spiritual goals in life, as all the means available to me during this period of Kaliyug are so unrighteous and corrupted that they would only lead me to ruin and to more miseries and troubles than what I have at present. Instead of solving my problems, giving me peace and happiness and aiding in my spiritual welfare, they would pull me down in a vortex of sorrows and grief, and rob me of whatever chance I have for my redemption.

After closely observing this state of affairs I therefore decided not to do anything in this fierce time of Kaliyug in order to fulfil my wishes. I decided instead that it is safer for me to approach you, because by doing so I will get all my all wishes fulfilled and spiritual needs met without the grave risk I would have encountered if I had tried other methods in this world, or had sought peace, happiness and comfort in anything in this world.”

Briefly, Tulsidas means that it is futile to hope of finding peace and happiness in this material world. And though it is theoretically possible that a creature can attain liberation and deliverance from his cycle of birth and death with its incumbent miseries, grief and torments, in practice it is very difficult and almost impossible to achieve. The various methods, means, paths and ways that are prescribed in the scriptures for this purpose, such as renunciation, dispassion, austerity, penance, meditation, contemplation, enlightenment, self-control and so many other means which are all extremely cumbersome and need so much focus and purity of effort that they can't be followed or done in the correct way during Kaliyug as the environment of this time is very pervert, sinful, evil and unrighteous. So, it is merely a wild dream to expect any success in such efforts.

In this hopeless scenario, the only sure method is to surrender to Lord God, in this case Lord Ram, have devotion, faith and affection for the Lord, and ask the Lord for shelter and protection. Nothing is more certain of fulfilling every desire of a devotee than this method.] (2).

Now, being thus scared of the world and the Kaliyug, and finding myself in a helpless and precarious condition (because I am worried about my welfare but have no wherewithal or resources to take care of it) (*hahari hiyamēm sadaya*), I asked the community of saints (*būjhaō jā'i sādhu-samāju*) if there was anyone who would be gracious enough to welcome a distressed and resourceless refuge who had gone to surrender at his feet, and would give shelter to a person who is as lazy, unenterprising, slothful and lethargic as me (Tulsidas) (*mōhusē kahum̐ katahum̐ kō'u*)?

[Oh Lord, you may wonder as to why I call myself so lazy and useless? I had guessed in the beginning that you are deferring to pay attention to me because you wonder why I had not done something meritorious in my life that would have prevented me from being in such a precarious situation that I have to wail and beg before others for protection and welfare. I have explained the reason to you hereinabove. So I approached wise saints for advice, and this is what they told me—]

Taking pity on me, all the saints had unanimously said that there was only one Lord of Kaushal (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) who does it, who can keep such persons under his protection, who extends his patronage and shelter to someone that fits my description (*tinha kahyō kōsalarāju*).

[So oh Lord, this is the reason why I have come to you, and I beg you to live up to your reputation by accepting me and granting me refuge in your holy feet, by granting me the stature of being your devotee and servant.] (3).

Oh an ocean of mercy and kindness (kr̥pābāridhi bāju)! Who can eliminate wretchedness, distress, misery, poverty, deprivation, weakness and lowliness except you (dīnatā-dārida dalai kō)?

Oh the son of Dasrath (i.e. Lord Sri Ram—"dasaratharāyakē")! You are the best among those (siratāju) who are reputed to be great donors, who are most famous for being exceedingly generous givers and liberal bestowers of grants and boons (dāni, tū bāna'ita) (4).

Oh Lord who is a protector of the poor and who takes care of those who are wretched, miserable and deprived (garībanivāju)! I am an extremely impoverished, hungry and distressed beggar since birth (janamakō bhūkhō bhikhārī hauṁ).

Now, let this Tulsidas have a stomach full of delicious food representing nectar-like devotion for you (pēṭa bhari tulasihi jēnvā'iya bhagati-sudhā sunāju)³.

[³Tulsidas has made his intentions clear here. He does not actually want physical food to feed his stomach, but a symbolic kind of food to nourish his soul and fulfil its desire for liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. It can come only when the Lord grants him the nectar-like drink of devotion—because like any thirsty and hungry man who wants nothing else but sweet water to quench his thirst and delicious food to fill his stomach, Tulsidas wants nothing from the Lord except the blessing of 'devotion for the Lord' from the Lord himself.

It is to be noted that Tulsidas remarkably seeks the 'blessing of devotion for Lord Ram' from the Lord himself! He is exceptionally clever when he asks the Lord for this boon—because he knows how cunning and evil Kaliyug is, and he fears that Kaliyug is sure to do some mischief that would sooner or later make Tulsidas lose his devotion for the Lord if he manages to acquire this grand virtue by his own effort. So he prays to the Lord himself to grant him devotion, because he knows that then Kaliyug won't be able to deprive him of this priceless spiritual gem no matter how hard it tries—as Kaliyug fears the Lord.

Tulsidas asks Lord Sri Ram to shower his grace, benevolence, benignance and compassion upon him to such an extent that no more desires, wants, shortages, sorrows, miseries, torments and tribulations etc. remain with him any longer, and he attains supreme bliss as well as emancipation and salvation.] (5).

Tulasidāsa prays to Lord Rāma to save him from the cruelty of Kaliyuga

(220)

करिय सँभार, कोसलराय!
 और ठौर न और गति, अवलंब नाम बिहाय ।।1।।
 बूझि अपनी आपनो हितु आप बाप न माय ।
 राम! राउर नाम गुर, सुर, स्वामि, सखा, सहाय ।।2।।
 रामराज न चले मानस—मलिनके छल छाय ।
 कोप तेहि कलिकाल कायर मुएहि घालत घाय ।।3।।

लेत केहरिको बयर ज्यों भेक हनि गोमाय ।
 त्योंहि राम—गुलाम जानि निकाम देत कुदाय ॥4॥
 अकनि याके कपट—करतब, अमित अनय—अपाय ।
 सुखी हरिपुर बसत होत परीछितहि पछिताय ॥5॥
 कृपासिंधु! बिलोकिये, जन—मनकी साँसति साय ।
 सरन आयो, देव! दीनदयालु! देखन पाय ॥6॥
 निकट बोलि न बरजिये, बलि जाउँ, हनिय न हाय ।
 देखिहैं हनुमान गोमुख नाहरनिके न्याय ॥7॥
 अरुन मुख, भ्रू बिकट, पिंगल नयन रोष—कषाय ।
 बीर सुमिरि समीरको घटिहै चपल चित चाय ॥8॥
 बिनय सुनि बिहँसे अनुजसों बचनके कहि भाय ।
 'भली कही' कह्यो लषन हूँ हँसि, बने सकल बनाय ॥9॥
 दई दीनहिं दादि, सो सुनि सुजन—सदन बधाय ।
 मिटे संकट—सोच, पोच—प्रपंच, पाप—निकाय ॥10॥
 पेखि प्रीति—प्रतीति जनपर अगुन अनघ अभाय ।
 दासतुलसी कहत मुनिगन, 'जयति जय उरुगाय' ॥11॥

(220)

kariya sam̐bhāra, kōsalarāya!
 aura ṭhaura na aura gati, avalamba nāma bihāya. 1.
 būjhi apanī āpanō hitu āpa bāpa na māya.
 rāma! rā'ura nāma gura, sura, svāmi, sakhā, sahāya. 2.
 rāmarāja na calē mānasa-malinakē chala chāya.
 kōpa tēhi kalikāla kāyara mu'ēhi ghālata ghāya. 3.
 lēta kēharikō bayara jyōm̐ bhēka hani gōmāya.
 tyōnhi rāma-gulāma jāni nikāma dēta kudāya. 4.
 akani yākē kapaṭa-karataba, amita anaya-apāya.
 sukhī haripura basata hōta parīchitahi pachitāya. 5.
 kṛpāsindhu! bilōkiyē, jana-manakī sām̐sati sāya.
 sarana āyō, dēva! dīnadayālu! dēkhana pāya. 6.
 nikaṭa bōli na barajiyē, bali jā'um̐, haniya na hāya.
 dēkhihair̐ hanumāna gōmukha nāharanikē n'yāya. 7.
 aruna mukha, bhrū bikaṭa, piṅgala nayana rōṣa-kaṣāya.
 bīra sumiri samīrakō ghaṭihai capala cita cāya. 8.
 binaya suni biham̐sē anujasōm̐ bacanakē kahi bhāya.
 'bhalī kahī' kahyō laṣana hūm̐ ham̐si, banē sakala banāya. 9.
 da'ī dīnahim̐ dādi, sō suni sujana-sadana badhāya.
 miṭē saṅkaṭa-sōca, pōca-prapan̐ca, pāpa-nikāya. 10.
 pēkhi prīti-pratīti janapara aguna anagha abhāya.
 dāsatalasī kahata munigana, 'jayati jaya urugāya'. 11.

Verse no. 220—[In the previous verse no. 219, Tulsidas has hinted to Lord Ram about the malfeasance and evil nature of Kaliyug. Now in this verse he requests the Lord to put a leash on the corrupt practices and pervert nature of Kaliyug.]

‘Oh King of Kaushal (Sri Ram—“kōsalarāya”), protect me, save me, take care of me (kariya sambhāra).

Besides your holy name (nāma bihāya), I don't have any other resource and no other recourse for obtaining succour, support and solace for myself (avalamba), nor do I have any other destination where I can go or from where I can expect any sort of welfare for myself (aura ṭhaura na aura gati). [To wit, Tulsidas says that the Lord's holy name is his only support and protector.]¹

[¹Refer for example verse no. 216, stanza no. 1 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ in this context. There are umpteen numbers of verses on this theme.] (1).

When you see your devotees you willingly use your discretionary authority and powers to take such care of their good, welfare and well-being that even their parents aren't able to do (būjhi apanī āpanō hitu āpa bāpa na māya).

[To wit, though a parent loves his or her child very much and would leave no stone unturned to secure the child's welfare and good, but no matter how hard they try no parent can give eternal peace and happiness to a creature, nor can they assure him of salvation and liberation from the bondage of this mundane, gross and temporal world. It is only Lord Ram who can do it for sure.]

Oh Lord Ram! Your majesty's holy name “RAM” (rāma! rā'ura nāma) is my only revered Guru (a teacher, preceptor, guide and advisor), my only God, my only Lord, Master, Friend and Helper or Assistant in times of need (gura, sura, svāmi, sakhā, sahāya)².

[²This same idea is expressed in the epic “Ram Charit Manas”, (i) Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 130 where sage Valmiki reiterates it; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 47 where the citizens of Ayodhya declare this fact unanimously.

Refer also to verse no. 28, stanza no. 6; verse no. 77, stanza no. 2; verse no. 79, stanza no. 3; of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (2).

In your kingdom known as ‘Rāmarāja’, it is said that anyone or any entity which has a malicious Mana (mind and heart) that is dark and tainted, a Mana that is characterised by negativities, deceit, corruption and evil tendencies that are morally and spiritually degrading, sinful, pervert and unscrupulous, cannot have any influence upon any creature and disturb anyone who lives in your kingdom (na calē mānasa-malinakē chala chāya).

But this coward Kaliyug (kalikāla kāyara) is so frustrated, so resentful, so indignant and so angered at his failure to spread his dark shadow of influence over your kingdom that he has decided to vent his ire and wreck vengeance upon me (kōpa tēhi) because he finds me too timid, weak and humble to resist him and oppose his merciless attacks upon me. So he is thrashing me and inflicting immense pain upon me (i.e. tormenting me by trying to impose his negativities and evil characters upon me, and forcing me to fall in line with his desires) inspite of the fact that I am already in a miserable state (mu'ēhi ghālata ghāya)³.

[³Now since Kaliyug has the spiritually tormenting characteristics as outlined above and he feels oppressed and neglected in your kingdom—because he can't confront you and disobey your laws and regulations, and therefore he can't have his way and prey upon innocent creatures who live in your kingdom so as to expand his family of the corrupt and the sinful—he has become very frustrated, angry and agitated.

Unable to oppose you and expand his field of influence on the people who have surrendered before you and have got your protection, i.e. those who are your devotees and servants, and thereby unable to propagate his family of the corrupt and the sinful, he has decided to vent his ire upon me whom he finds be too timid, weak and humble to resist him and stand against his high-handedness. Therefore, this wicked fellow Kaliyug is striking me hard; he is eying me angrily and scornfully, hurting and tormenting me endlessly inspite of the fact that I am already in a miserable and pitiable state. This situation has aggravated my pain and agony immensely.

This rascal of a fellow Kaliyug is highly immoral and unscrupulous; he has no pity upon even the most helpless persons like me; he is of a most vile and sinful nature; he is of an extremely pervert mind that is full of corruption, treachery, malevolence and capriciousness. He has become so arrogant, bold and reckless that he is not even afraid of the fact that I live in your kingdom, that I have submitted myself before Lord Ram and have already made a plea before his majesty to protect me against Kaliyug, and that the Lord is so merciful that when he comes to learn how Kaliyug is tormenting me he is bound to punish him severely.

Kaliyug is a “coward” because he is not able to confront you and resist your orders directly; in fact he flees when he sees you, and he refrains from disturbing those who have your protection. But inspite of this cowardice and appearance of obeying you, look oh Lord, what is he doing to me? Now therefore, it has become imperative for you to intervene and stop this wicked fellow from making me suffer more.] (3).

Oh Lord, like a jackal that kills a harmless and humble frog, who is unable to resist him (bhēka hani gōmāya), to avenge its anger at the lion (lēta kēharikō bayara jyōm), this fellow Kaliyug has drubbed and tormented me gravely, he has hurt me deeply (nikāma dēta kudāya), because he knows me to be your servant (devotee, follower, subordinate or dependant) (tyōnhi rāma-gulāma jāni)⁴.

[⁴Here, Kaliyug is compared to a ‘Jackal’, Lord Ram to the ‘Lion’, and Tulsidas to the poor ‘Frog’.

Kaliyug has a problem with you, Lord Ram. He is very spiteful, vehemently opposed and full of malice towards you, but he cannot do any harm to you, so he is tormenting this wretched and weak fellow Tulsidas in your stead because he finds me too weak to oppose him.] (4).

Even the great king Parikshit, who now resides happily in the exalted abode of the Lord God (in heaven) (sukhī haripura basata hōta parīchitahi), is lamenting and is full of regret (pachitāya) on hearing his (Kaliyug's) deceitful, evil, treacherous, pervert, capricious, recklessly and unscrupulous deeds, numerous misdemeanours, unlawful and unrighteous behaviour, and the various hurdles that he puts in the path followed by the saints and those who are noble and righteous (akani yākē kapaṭa-karataba, amita anaya-apāya)⁵.

[⁵The story of Parikshit is narrated in brief at the end of this verse—and marked *. He regrets that he had shown mercy on Kaliyug when he had caught him at the end of Dwapar-Yug and the beginning of Kalilyug, and had let him off instead of slaying him right then. Had the king then killed Kaliyug, the havoc and the misery he is creating in the present time would have been avoided.] (5).

Oh Lord who is an ocean of mercy and munificence (krpāsindhu)! Have a kind, compassionate, benign and merciful glance at me (bilōkiyē) so that the troubles and agonies tormenting the mind and heart of this servant of yours are calmed down (jana-manakī sāmśati sāya).

Oh the one who is benevolent and munificent towards the wretched, the deprived, the downtrodden and the lowly (dīnadayālu)! Oh Lord (dēva)! I have come to take refuge at your holy feet (sarana āyō) so that I may have your Darshan (holy viewing; holy sight) (dēkhana pāya) (6).

If you have taken pity on him (i.e. Kaliyug) so much so that you do not wish to summon him to put a leash on his evil ways (his mischief, his misdemeanours and his reckless behaviour—“nikaṭa bōli na barajiyē”), or to punish him severely by slaying him (i.e. vanquishing him altogether) because he would, in all probability, cry pitifully before you in a distressed voice, begging for mercy (haniya na hāya)—then oh Lord, in this situation my humble plea and earnest submission before you (bali jā’um̐) is that you should at least quietly signal Hanuman to warn Kaliyug to mend his ways. At your hint, Hanuman would glare sternly at his (Kaliyug’s) face with a contemptuous scorn and a fierce scowl (dēkhihaim̐ hanumāna) even as a lion looks at the face of a cow (gōmukha nāharanikē n’yāya)⁶.

[⁶Tulsidas guesses that since Lord Ram is exceptionally gracious and merciful, he is probably reluctant to take any stern action against Kaliyug because the latter is also one of the Lord’s subjects. People of varying nature, different characters and diverse qualities reside in a great king’s kingdom, and all of them are his equal subjects whom the king is expected to deal with friendliness, equanimity, mercy and justice. So is the case with Kaliyug. Perhaps Lord Ram takes pity on him because the Lord has a soft corner in his heart for those subjects of his kingdom who are lowly, fallen and devoid of any goodness. Even Tulsidas has acknowledged this great quality of the Lord that he is especially kind to the lowly, the wretched and the sinful—for instance, refer verse no. 215, stanza no. 1, and verse no. 216, stanza no. 5 of this book Vinai Patrika.

Its alright then, says Tulsidas, for the Lord not to severely punish Kaliyug for his evil nature and misdemeanours because the Lord takes pity on him when he cries “Oh Lord, alas, I am too sinful to be cast away by you; where will I go if even you throw me away from your kingdom?”, just like the way Tulsidas himself pleads before the Lord—refer verse no. 217, stanza no. 6 herein above in this book Vinai Patrika.

But at the same time, Lord Ram must also keep in view the way Kaliyug is horrifying Tulsidas. Say, how would a just king react if he finds that someone in his kingdom is causing immense hardship and suffering to others even though the king may have pardoned this tormentor for his evil nature in some time in the past. A prudent king may not directly punish the offending subject, but he can at least direct one of his senior ministers to take the matter up and teach this wayward subject some good lesson so that he would mend his ways, and threaten him with severe punishment if he won’t. Likewise, Lord Ram can signal Hanuman, his most trusted and able aide, to warn Kaliyug to stop his mischief and desist from tormenting those who are humble, helpless and hapless like Tulsidas.] (7).

[Having got a signal from you, and having taken cognizance of the pervert, deceitful, cunning, evil, vile and unscrupulous nature of Kaliyug and the horrifying deeds done

by him—) When Hanuman will make his face red (*aruna mukha*), his eyebrows curved menacingly (*bhrū bikaṭa*), and the yellow of his eyes turned into red with anger, contempt and hate for him (*Kaliyug*) (*piṅgala nayana rōṣa-kaṣāya*), then by mere remembrance of (or vision of) such a ferocious and stern feature of the brave ‘Son of the Wind God’ (i.e. Hanuman) (*bīra sumiri samīrakō*), all the enthusiasm and zeal that this fickle minded, unstable and irreverent fellow Kaliyug has for creating mischief, nuisance and trouble would simply vanish (*ghaṭihai capala cita cāya*)⁷.

[⁷To wit, as soon as Kaliyug sees the angry face of Hanuman, he would lose his wits and forget all his tricks, his crookedness, his perversities, turpitudes and wickedness—for he knows very well how unforgiving Hanuman is against those who torment the devotees of Lord Ram and the followers of the path of righteousness and noble conduct.] (8).

Tulsidas says that when Lord Ram heard his prayers and arguments, the Lord smiled (*binaya suni bihamśē*) and explained to his younger brother Laxman the implications of all that I have said (and how clever I was) (*anujasōm bacanakē kahi bhāya*).

At this, Laxman laughed and said, ‘Yes, what Tulsidas says is correct.’ (*bhalī kahī’ kahyō laṣana hūm’ hamśi*)

That was enough; my purpose was served (*banē sakala banāya*).

[To wit, I had achieved success in my endeavour to put a leash on this miscreant Kaliyug and teach him a lesson. At least now I can be assured that my torments and miseries caused in the hands of Kaliyug will stop forthwith, and so will the torments and tribulations of all other devotees of Lord Sri Ram whom Kaliyug subjects to immense suffering.] (9).

The news that justice has been done to this wretched and humble Tulsidas who was terrified and tormented by Kaliyug spread far and wide (*daī dīnahim dādi*). It made all the households of saintly people erupt in joy even as they sang their thanks for the Lord (*sō suni sujana-sadana badhāya*). [All saintly people now felt happy that their sorrows, miseries and worries caused by Kaliyug would now end.]

The swarming hordes of sorrows, miseries, tribulations, worries, deceit, conceit, perversions, treachery, sins, vices, evils, faults, crimes etc. (*saṅkaṭa-sōca, pōca-prapañca, pāpa-nikāya*)—all of them were eliminated (*miṭē*). [To wit, all these negative influences of Kaliyug hid from the devotees of Lord Sri Ram, the saints and pious people; they stopped tormenting them any further.] (10).

Tulsidas says (*dāsatulasī kahata*) that when the exalted sages, hermits and saintly people (*munigana*) observed Lord Ram showing such grace and selfless affection on his servant and devotee (i.e. on Tulsidas) (*pēkhi prīti-pratīti janapara aguna anagha abhāya*), all of them felt extremely happy and exhilarated; they exulted in joy and proclaimed “Glory to the Lord who possesses such excellent virtues and noble characters that has made him immensely famous and acquire matchless honour and respect in the world. Hail him and his famed glories!” (*‘jayati jaya urugāya’*) (11).

[Note—*⁵Kaliyug and king Parikshit: King Parikshit (the grandson of Arjun) was hunting in a deep forest at the fag end of Dwapar Yug when he saw a dark savage looking man chasing a cow and a lame bull. On enquiry, it transpired that the man was Kaliyug, the cow was mother earth and the bull was Dharma. The king drew his

sword to slay the persecutor Kaliyug when the latter fell at the king's feet pleading mercy and forgiveness. Being righteous and merciful, the king stopped short in his tracks because killing of a refugee was highly unrighteous, and excused him. The savage and cunning Kaliyug extracted a promise from him that he could stay at 14 specific places, and one among them was gold. The king had a crown of gold, so the treacherous, wicked rascal (Kaliyug) immediately leapt and hid there, thereby corrupting the intellect, wisdom and discriminatory power of the king. On the way back, he passed by the hermitage of a sage in deep meditation. When the latter did not answer the king's calls, the by-now pervert and corrupted king put a dead serpent around the sage's neck in derision and to mock him. The sage's son cursed the king that he would die of a snake's bite on the 7th day. The king was full of remorse and lamented; so, in order to obtain redemption, he heard the recitation of the Srimad Bhagwat for 7 consecutive days and attained heaven. This is how Kaliyug managed to survive and unleash a reign of most unrighteous, unscrupulous demeanours and reckless sins, turpitudes and vices which have shackled, pilloried, tormented as well as polluted and defiled mankind even till this date.]

(221)

नाथ! कृपा ही को पंथ चितवत दीन हौं दिनराति ।
होइ धौं केहि काल दीनदयालु! जानि न जाति ।।1।।
सुगुन, ग्यान—बिराग—भगति, सु—साधननिकी पाँति ।
भजे बिकल बिलोकि कलि अघ—अवगुननिकी थाति ।।2।।
अति अनीति—कुरीति भइ भुइँ तरनि हू ते ताति ।
जाउँ कहँ? बलि जाउँ, कहँ न ठाउँ, मति अकुलाति ।।3।।
आप सहित न आपनो कोउ, बाप! कठिन कुभाँति ।
स्यामघन! सींचिये तुलसी, सालि सफल सुखाति ।।4।।

(221)

nātha! kṛpā hī kō pantha citavata dīna haurṁ dinarāti.
hō'i dhaurṁ kēhi kāla dīnadayālu! jāni na jāti. 1.
suguna, gyāna-birāga-bhagati, su-sāadhananikī pāmṭi.
bhajē bikala bilōki kali agha-avagunanikī thāti. 2.
ati anīti-kurīti bha'i bhu'im̐ tarani hū tē tāti.
jā'um̐ kaham̐? bali jā'um̐, kahūm̐ na ṭhā'um̐, mati akulāti. 3.
āpa sahita na āpanō kō'u, bāpa! kaṭhina kubhāmṭi.
syāmaghana! sīnciyē tulasī, sāli saphala sukhāti. 4.

Verse no. 221—Oh Lord (nātha)! I wait day and night humbly seeking your kind grace and mercy (kṛpā hī kō pantha citavata dīna haurṁ dinarāti).

Oh the one who is so kind and compassionate towards the distressed, the wretched, the lowly, the meek, the weak and the humble (dīnadayālu)! I don't know when I'll be fortunate enough to have that what I seek (i.e. be the beneficiary of your mercy, kindness, munificence, benignance and benevolence) (hō'i dhaurṁ kēhi kāla dīnadayālu! jāni na jāti) (1).

The lot of noble virtues and excellent characters (*suguna*), of wisdom and enlightenment, of renunciation and detachment, of devotion and worship (*gyāna-birāga-bhagati*), and all other potentially good means and spiritual ways (by which one obtains salvation, liberation and emancipation in life—“*su-sāadhananikī pām̐ti*”) have run away and abandoned me because they are terrified at the very sight of Kaliyug (*bhajē bikala bilōki kali*)¹.

What is left (with me) is the horde of sins, evils, vices, faults, perversions, unrighteousness and all such vile characters and unscrupulous qualities (*agha-avagunanikī thāti*)².

[¹Refer also to verse nos. 139, 173, 184, 194 and 220 regarding the menace of Kaliyug.

²To wit, if I expect to have your grace relying upon some good character in me, or if you would grace and show mercy upon me only if I have goodness, then forget about it—as I have none of the fine spiritual qualities or good virtues one expects from a holy man who has been blessed by you. But oh Lord, that will not give you any fame. Your greatness lies not in showing grace and benevolence upon those who are already holy and pious and would be eligible to claim spiritual reward because of their own qualities, but by showing your grace and mercy upon those like me who are absolutely devoid of any good qualities but nonetheless have come to seek shelter at your holy feet, have surrendered themselves unconditionally before you and honestly say that they are sinful but are ready for atonement if you just shower your grace upon them. Listen Lord, helping those who need help is a quality, is a virtue that makes a Lord great and renowned and honoured and much sought after. Besides this, in all sooth, you are famed for being a friend of the lowly and the downtrodden, for being merciful and benevolent to the highest level, so why should I not expect your grace for myself?] (2).

The earth has become hotter than the sun (i.e. it has become extremely tormenting and inhospitable) due to the great heat caused by the huge fire symbolising grave injustice, unbridled corruption, extremes of unrighteousness and improprieties, uncountable misdeeds, and unscrupulous behaviour done unabashedly (*ati anīti-kurīti bha'i bhu'im̐ tarani hū tē tāti*).

There is no method or medium left by which I can get peace and comfort for myself in this horrifying scenario, instead of being burnt or scorched by the symbolic heat I have described herein above. One feels extremely agitated and miserable, but finds no way to get succour from his miseries, and there seems to be no place or destination where I can hope to go to find peace for myself (*kahūm̐ na thā'um̐*).

[To wit, in the present scenario, there seems to be no way out for a trapped creature who is endlessly being tormented by the vices prevalent in Kaliyug. He feels extremely agitated and miserable, but finds no way to get succour from his miseries.]

(In such a situation) Where shall I go for relief and solace (except to come to you) (*jā'um̐ kaham̐*)? Oh Lord, glory be to you (*bali jā'um̐*)! I plead before you and submit myself most humbly and unconditionally before you, with a prayer (*bali jā'um̐*) that I have no other destination or succour (except your holy feet). My mind is totally perplexed, and utterly confounded and agitated (*mati akulāti*) (3).

Oh my Father (bāpa)! No one can be called my own and my well-wisher in this world, and this includes my own body (āpa sahita na āpanō kō'u). Everyone seems to be opposed to me; all means and ways by which I hope to get peace and solace seem to be extremely difficult and hard to practice; no one seems to either care for me or help me in any way (kaṭhina kubhāmṭi)³.

[³The irony is that my own body is a source of great misery for me, what to talk of others. It makes miserable for me as if it was my greatest enemy. It never tires of demanding this and that from me, and I have never been able to sufficiently satisfy its needs and demands. It falls sick; it gets thirsty and hungry; it needs physical comfort and pleasures. It continuously torments me, it keeps nagging at me, it goes on whinnying and pinching me no matter how great an effort I make to please it. Whom should I approach for help or support in this situation, oh Lord, if it is not you? All appear to be stone-hearted, apathetic, unscrupulous, evil, perverse and treacherous (and I have lost all faith in them and trust them no more.)]

Oh the Lord with a dark complexion like that of a rain-bearing cloud (syāmaghana)! This mature harvest of rice symbolised by this fellow Tulsidas is dying for lack of water (sāli saphala sukhāti). So even at this late stage and before it's too late, assume the form of a cloud and shower the water symbolising your grace, mercy and benevolence upon this harvest ("sīnciyē tulasī"; i.e. on Tulsidas who is on the verge of ruin)⁴.

[⁴Here, 'the rain-cloud' is Lord Ram, 'the harvest on the verge of dying' is Tulsidas, and 'the rain' is the mercy and grace of the Lord which Tulsidas seeks upon himself from the Lord.] (4).

Lord Rāma is the only Benevolent Lord and a Benefactor of all

(222)

बलि जाऊँ, और कासों कहाँ?
सदगुनसिंधु स्वामि सेवक—हितु कहूँ न कृपानिधि—सो लहाँ ।।1।।
जहँ जहँ लोभ—लोल लालचबस निजहित चित चाहनि चहौँ ।
तहँ तहँ तरनि तकत उलूक ज्यों भटकि कुतरु—कोटर गहौँ ।।2।।
काल—सुभाउ—करम बिचित्र फलदायक सुनि सिर धुनि रहौँ ।
मोको तौ सकल सदा एकहि रस दुसह दाह दारुन दहौँ ।।3।।
उचित अनाथ होइ दुखभाजन भयो नाथ! किंकर न हौँ ।
अब रावरो कहाइ न बूझिये, सरनपाल! साँसति सहौँ ।।4।।
महाराज! राजीवबिलोचन! मगन—पाप—संताप हौँ ।
तुलसी प्रभु! जब तब जेहि तेहि बिधि राम निबाहे निरबहौँ ।।5।।

(222)

balī jā'umṛ, aura kāsōṁ kahauṁ?

sadagunasindhu svāmi sēvaka-hitu kahumṛ na kṛpānidhi-sō lahaumṛ. 1.

jahamṛ jahamṛ lōbha-lōla lālacabasa nijahita cita cāhani cahauṁ.

tahamṛ tahamṛ tarani takata ulūka jyōṁ bhaṭaki kutaru-kōṭara gahauṁ. 2.

kāla-subhā'u-karama bicitra phaladāyaka suni sira dhuni rahauṁ.
 mōkō tau sakala sadā ēkahi rasa dusaha dāha dārūna dahauṁ. 3.
 ucita anātha hō'i dukhabhājana bhayō nātha! kiṅkara na hauṁ.
 aba rāvarō kahā'i na bījhiyē, saranapāla! sāmśati sahouṁ. 4.
 mahārāja! rājīvabilōcana! magana-pāpa-santāpa hauṁ.
 tulasī prabhu! jaba taba jēhi tēhi bidhi rāma nibāhē nirabahauṁ. 5.

Verse no. 222—Oh Lord! Glory to you (bali jā'um̐)! Whom shall I tell (about my sorrows and troubles—“aura kāsōṁ kahauṁ”)? A Lord like you (-sō) who is an ocean of all noble and virtuous characters (sadagunasindhu), a Lord who is the well-wisher and benefactor of his servants (followers, subordinates, dependants, devotees--svāmi sēvaka-hitu), and who is an abode of kindness, compassion and munificence (krpānidhi)—indeed is no where else to be found (kahum̐ na lahouṁ) (1).

At all other places wherever I go (jaham̐ jaham̐) to try to seek welfare, solace, succour, good fortune and happiness for myself (nijahita) upon being inspired (or impelled) by my greedy and wistful nature that is propelled by my mind that is fickle and unstable (lōbha-lōla lālacabasa cita cāhani cahauṁ), I am let down at every such place (taham̐ taham̐), and being left high and dry I have to return empty-handed, frustrated and hopeless, just like an owl who returns desperately to its hole in the tree as soon as it sees the sun rise (tarani takata ulūka jyōṁ bhaṭaki kutaru-kōṭara gahauṁ)¹

[¹To wit, wherever I go, full of hope, expecting some solace and succour for my tormented self, I am faced with the fire of frustration, rejection, dejection, sorrows and miseries. No one, no place, none whatsoever gives me any hope of any kind. I feel rejected, distressed, despaired and crestfallen. Oh Lord, I have come to the conclusion that my only hope lies in you.

In this stanza, Tulsidas has used the example of the ‘owl’ to describe his own frustration. The owl flies in the sky seeking food for itself, but ironically when the day dawns and everything becomes visible in the light of the sun, instead of getting what it seeks the owl feels horrified by the daylight, and to escape further torment it rushes to the darkness of its hole in the tree. Tulsidas says that while the sun makes everything visible and accessible for the rest of the world, it becomes an enemy for the owl. So likewise, all the paths for spiritual well-being and means for one’s welfare as prescribed in the scriptures seem to have turned hostile towards Tulsidas. What normally would be deemed to be helpful for a man’s spiritual well-being seems to have turned inimical for him. He feels hopeless, dismayed and forlorn, despairing for his welfare and happiness. He feels terrified of the world and discovers that his only hope now is with Lord Ram, for no one else would help him.] (2).

When I hear that favourable time and circumstances, good nature, character and habits, and good deeds and noble actions (kāla-subhā'u-karama) give excellent and outstanding rewards to a person (bicitra phaladāyaka), it seem mysterious and strange to me, and I despairingly beat my head in disgust (suni sira dhuni rahauṁ).

The reason is that as far as I am concerned, these three make no difference and are all the same (mōkō tau sakala sadā ēkahi rasa)—because no matter what I do, no matter how good I try to be and pray for good times for myself, I am always left high and dry, I never get any reward. Instead, I keep constantly burning from the

fierce and intolerable fire of continuous torments and miseries that never seem to abate (dusaha dāha dāruna dahaum)².

[²For me, time and circumstance have never been favourable even once, my habits are so evil, perverse, corrupt and mean, that they will not let me live in peace, and my deeds are no better. So, in short, I don't get a breather, so to say. My condition is utterly hopeless and hapless, and appears beyond retrieval. Hence, the only succour and the only light at the end of the tunnel for me is in seeking refuge/shelter in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram for, then, the ball of my fate and its protection will be firmly in the Lord's court, as it were!] (3).

Oh Lord (nātha)! Till the moment I had not thought of becoming your servant (devotee—"kiṅkara na hauṁ"), till the time I had not taken refuge or shelter in your feet and had accepted your Lordship and patronage (ucita anātha hō'i), it was understandable and justified that I be allowed to become an object for sorrows, miseries, tribulations and agonies of various kinds (dukhabhājana bhayō) because I was under the misconception that I had no Lord, that I was lonely, I was desolate and a destitute (anātha hō'i).

But, oh the universal protector of those who have taken refuge with you (saranapāla), now that I have become a humble protectee and servant (follower, devotee, dependant) of the Lord and still have to undergo the same agony and desperation as earlier, is beyond justification and comprehension (aba rāvarō kahā'i na bījhiyē, sāmśati sahaum). [I can't understand why no relief is forthcoming now?] (4).

Oh the Great King of Kings ("mahārāja"; Lord Sri Ram)! Oh the lotus-eyed one (rājīvabilōcana)! I am feeling dazed, stifled and overwhelmed by sins, vices, evils, torments, agitations, miseries etc. (magana-pāpa-santāpa hauṁ).

Oh Lord (prabhu)! This Tulsidas can be redeemed and taken care of only if you decide to do so in any manner you deem fit for him (tulasī jaba taba jēhi tēhi bidhi rāma nibāhē nirabahauṁ) (5).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Will the Lord accept me and have benevolence upon me?

(223)

आपनो कबहुँ करि जानिहौ ।
 राम गरीबनिवाज राज-मनि, बिरद-लाज उर आनिहौ ॥1॥
 सील-सिंधु, सुंदर, सब लायक, समरथ, सदगुन-खानि हौ ।
 पाल्यो है, पालत, पालहुगे प्रभु, प्रनत-प्रेम पहिचानिहौ ॥2॥
 बेद-पुरान कहत, जग जानत, दीनदयालु दिन-दानि हौ ।
 कहि आवत, बलि जाउँ, मनहुँ मेरी बार बिसारे बानि हौ ॥3॥
 आरत-दीन-अनाथनिके हित मानत लौकिक कानि हौ ।
 है परिनाम भलो तुलसीको सरनागत-भय भानि हौ ॥4॥

(223)

āpanō kabahum̐ kari jānihau.
 rāma garībanivāja rāja-mani, birada-lāja ura ānihau. 1.
 sīla-sindhu, sundara, saba lāyaka, samaratha, sadaguna-khāni hau.
 pālyō hai, pālata, pālahugē prabhu, pranata-prēma pahicānihau. 2.
 bēda-purāna kahata, jaga jānata, dīnadayālu dina-dāni hau.
 kahi āvata, bali jā'um̐, manahum̐ mērī bāra bisārē bāni hau. 3.
 ārata-dīna-anāthanikē hita mānata laukika kāni hau.
 hai parināma bhalō tulasīkō saranāgata-bhaya bhāni hau. 4.

Verse no. 223—Oh Lord! Will you ever regard me as one of your own faithful and true devotee, follower, supplicant, servant, dependant or subordinate (and treat me accordingly—“āpanō kabahum̐ kari jānihau”)?

Oh Ram! You are the benefactor and a well-wisher of the poor, the meek, the lowly and the impoverished (rāma garībanivāja), and are like a jewel in the fraternity of Kings (i.e. are the King of Kings, and the Lord Emperor of all living beings) (rāja-mani). Will you ever give a thought to your famed reputation and glory in this regard (while considering my case with compassion) (birada-lāja ura ānihau)? (1).

You are an ocean of excellent virtues of politeness, courteousness, civility and the best of other noble characters (sīla-sindhu); you are adorable and beautiful in all respects (i.e. you are not only handsome and attractive from the physical perspective, but also have all those wonderful characters and virtues that are most worthy and adorable), and are amply qualified, immensely potent and fully able to do everything (i.e. nothing is beyond your abilities and reach as you are almighty and omnipotent) (sundara, saba lāyaka, samaratha). You are a mine or treasury of all the grand virtues that are auspicious, wonderful and outstanding (sadaguna-khāni hau).

Oh Lord (prabhu)! You have being doing this from time immemorable, are doing it now at present, and shall continue to do so even in the future (pālyō hai, pālata, pālahugē). You have always sustained and taken care of your refugees, protectees and shelter-seekers who have come to bow before you and surrender to you with love and devotion (pranata-prēma pahicānihau).

This being the case, will you not recognise (or realise, consider, pay attention to) the sincere love and affection (and ardent devotion, faith, loyalty, conviction etc.) that this refugee (Tulsidas) also has for you (pranata-prēma pahicānihau)¹?

[¹To wit, oh dear and merciful Lord, will you forget that this humble fellow called Tulsidas has the greatest of affection, love and devotion for you, that he has come to surrender himself before you, and that he has no other succour and refuge except you? And therefore, does he not qualify to be the beneficiary of your grace and blessings? This being the case, should I not be assured of your benevolence and mercy upon me?] (2).

The Vedas and Purans proclaim (bēda-purāna kahata) and the world also knows (jaga jānata) that you are always most graceful, merciful, munificent, benignant and

benevolent towards those are wretched, distressed, poor and humble, and that you liberally bestow upon them the blessings of auspiciousness, welfare and well-being on a regular and daily basis (*dīnadayālu dina-dāni hau*).

I plead before you and invoke your greatness (*bali jā'um*) while being compelled to say, with regret of course, that when my case came up before you, you seem to have all but forgotten about your great fame and reputation (*manahum mēri bāra bisārē bāni hau*) that have been heard about with regard to the facts mentioned herein above (*kahi āvata*)².

[²To wit, I am forced by the circumstances that are evident before me to complain to you and submit most humbly that in my case it seems you have just forgotten, or pretend to forget, about your habit and reputation of welcoming those who are humble and have come to seek refuge with you. I am unable to understand why I am being subjected to so much suffering and misery inspite of my taking shelter at your holy feet, because it is famed in the Vedas and the Purans that once someone comes to seek refuge with you he is automatically granted your blessings that assure him of freedom from all miseries and problems. So, since my torments and problems still persist, I am constrained to deduce that you are not paying due attention to me. But oh Lord, it will show you in very bad light before the world. So even on this consideration you must protect this humble Tulsidas who has great faith, love and devotion for you.] (3).

Inspite of you being a benefactor and well-wisher of the wretched, the lowly, the distressed, the destitutes and the desolate ones (*ārata-dīna-anāthanikē hita*), are you afraid of this world (*mānata laukika kāni hau*)³?

[³Are you afraid that you will get a bad name by favouring such a sinful and evil person as me? Is this the reason why you are neglecting me? Are you reluctant to accept me because you think that the world will start gossiping that you did not follow the sanction of the scriptures by accepting this sinful, vile and decadent Tulsidas in your refuge instead of punishing him or turning him away outright? Why, are you scared of tongues wagging that you have been favourable to such a wicked fellow such as me by extending your patronage towards me and protecting me? But oh my Lord, your own reputation says that you do protect such persons. And therefore you will be within your rights to accept me, notwithstanding how unworthy I am.]

Whatever be the matter, Tulsidas is assured that once he has come to surrender himself before you and seek your grace and blessings (*hai parināma bhalō tulasikō saranāgata*), his welfare and an auspicious end is assured because you are the vanquisher and destroyer of the fears of your refugees (*saranāgata-bhaya bhāni hau*)! (4).

Advice to the mind

(224)

रघुबरहि कबहुँ मन लागिहै?
कुपथ, कुचाल, कुमति, कुमनोरथ, कुटिल कपट कब त्यागिहै ॥१॥
जानत गरल अमिय बिमोहबस, अमिय गनत करि आगि है ।

उलटी रीति—प्रीति अपनेकी तजि प्रभुपद अनुरागिहै ।।2।।
 आखर अरथ मंजु मृदु मोदक राम—प्रेम—पगि पागिहै ।
 ऐसे गुन गाइ रिझाइ स्वामिसों पाइहै जो मुँह माँगिहै ।।3।।
 तू यहि बिधि सुख—सयन सोइहै, जियकी जरनि भूरि भागिहै ।
 राम—प्रसाद दासतुलसी उर राम—भगति—जोग जागिहै ।।4।।

(224)

raghubarahi kabahum̐ mana lāgihai?
 kupatha, kucāla, kumati, kumanōratha, kuṭila kapaṭa kaba
 tyāgihai. 1.
 jānata garala amiya bimōhabasa, amiya ganata kari āgi hai.
 ulaṭi rīti-prīti apanēkī taji prabhupada anurāgihai. 2.
 ākhara aratha manju mṛdu mōdaka rāma-prēma-pagi pāgihai.
 aisē guna gā'i rijhā'i svāmisōm pā'ihai jō mumha mām̐gihai. 3.
 tū yahi bidhi sukha-sayana sō'ihai, jiyakī jarani bhūri bhāgihai.
 rāma-prasāda dāsatusī ura rāma-bhagati-jōga jāgihai. 4.

Verse no. 224—Oh my Mana (the combination of the mind, its sub-conscious, and the emotional and sentimental aspect of the heart of a living being)! Will you ever concentrate yourself, think seriously about, and focus your attention on Sri Raghubir (Ram) (as you have been doing with all others in this world)? [To wit, will you, oh my Mana, ever focus your attention on Lord Ram and have true devotion and affection for him so much so that you would think of nothing else but the Lord?] (raghubarahi kabahum̐ mana lāgihai?).

Oh you evil, deceitful, cunning, wicked and treacherous one! When will you abandon your unrighteous, unscrupulous and decadent behaviour, your wayward and reckless nature, your schemings, connings and trickeries, your corrupted wisdom and pervert thinking, your evil desires, treachery, imposturings, pretensions, deceit, fraud etc.? [I am perturbed and perplexed at your stupidity and obstinacy! Say, when would you change yourself and your pervert nature, and instead take the auspicious path leading to Lord Ram?] (kupatha, kucāla, kumati, kumanōratha, kuṭila kapaṭa kaba tyāgihai) (1).

You are under the influence (effect or spell) of a great illusion and so much deluded due to your ignorance (bimōhabasa) that you have been erroneously regarding the 'poison-like' (harmful) and delusory objects of the materialistic world as being of real worth and beneficial for you, like it were a source of Amrit (the elixir of life) (jānata garala amiya), while considering the actual 'nectar' (in the form of Lord's devotion, worship and affection) to be as tormenting and avoidable as the scorching heat of the fire (amiya ganata kari āgi hai). [To wit, you are so overwhelmed by delusions arising out of your own stupidity that you treat the nectar-like devotion, affection and worship of Lord Ram that would give you eternal peace and beatitude as something useless and not worth the effort, and instead prefer to waste your time and life on futile pursuits of this material world that is gross and perishable and would only aggravate your spiritual problems. You don't realise your folly. This is only due to your delusions and false beliefs.]

When will you abandon your subversive habits and evil temperaments that are misleading you on the wrong path, that are adversely affecting your own welfare and well-being, that are propelling you towards your own ruin by motivating you to pursue this gross perishable world and be enamoured with its material sense objects with the erroneous belief that they are good for you (*ulaṭi rīti-prīti apanēkī taji*), while discarding devotion and affection for the holy feet of Lord Ram wherein lies your actual welfare and well-being? (*prabhupada anurāgihai*) [To wit, when will you abandon your foolishness and become wise enough to develop devotion, love, affection, faith and worship for the holy feet of Lord Ram which will stand you in good stead?] (2).

When will you soak (*pāgihai*) the symbolic sweet ‘Laddus’ (“*mṛdu mōdaka*”--which are a ball-shaped sweet made from globules of gram flour that are fried in clarified butter called Ghee and then soaked in jaggery or a thick syrup of sugar) consisting of the two letters of the name of Lord Ram (i.e., ‘Ra’ and ‘Ma’) and their tender (comforting, easy to understand and spiritually soothing) meaning (or essence) (*ākḥara aratha marīju*) in the sweetened syrup of love, affection, devotion and adoration for Sri Ram? (*rāma-prēma-pagi*) [To wit, will you, oh my Mana, ever remember Lord Sri Ram's holy name and its spiritually elevating, rejuvenating and bliss-providing meaning, with its stupendous and mystical spiritual potentials and powers, in a selfless manner, with full sincerity, devotion, affection, love and faith for the Lord?]

If you are able to please your Lord by thus singing his glories and famed virtues, you will surely and without doubt get whatever you wish (*aisē guna gā'i rijhā'i svāmisōm pā'ihai jō mumḥa māmḡihai*) (3).

If you do (i.e. follow the advice as described and outlined herein above), you would sleep peacefully for eternity on a bedstead of abiding bliss, peace, beatitude and felicity (i.e., you shall get liberation from the shackles of this mundane world and find salvation) (*tū yahi bidhi sukha-sayana sō'ihai*).

Indeed, all your great problems that have been causing you so much of heart-burn (and have arisen due to ignorance, delusions, attachments, infatuations, envy, greed, avarice etc.) would calm down and be extinguished for ever (*jiyakī jarani bhūri bhāgihai*).

[Addressing himself, saint Tulsidas says thus—] Oh Tulsidas (*dāsatulasī*)! If you follow this advice, then by the grace, blessing and kindness of Lord Sri Ram (*rāma-prasāda*) your heart will become enlightened and you shall attain the exalted stature of being a ‘wise-one’ who is an expert and has attained accomplishment in the spiritual field of devotion, love, affection, veneration and worship of Lord Sri Ram, called the ‘Bhakti Yoga’ (*ura rāma-bhagati-jōga jāgihai*) (4).

[Note: Refer also to verse nos. 84-85, 87-90, 124, 126, 143, 196, 199 herein before in this Book in the context of this verse which gives ‘advice to the mind’.]

There is no Lord comparable to Śrī Rāma

भरोसो और आइहै उर ताके ।
 कै कहूँ लहै जो रामहि—सो साहिब, कै अपनो बल जाके ।।1।।
 कै कलिकाल कराल न सूझत, मोह—मार—मद छाके ।
 कै सुनि स्वामि—सुभाउ न रह्यो चित, जो हित सब अँग थाके ।।2।।
 हौं जानत भलिभाँति अपनपौ, प्रभु—सो सुन्यो न साके ।
 उपल, भील, खग, मृग रजनीचर, भले भये करतब काके ।।3।।
 मोको भलो राम—नाम सुरतरु—सो, रामप्रसाद कृपालु कुपाके ।
 तुलसी सुखी निसोच राज ज्यों बालक माय—बबाके ।।4।।

(225)

bharōsō aura ā'ihai ura tākē.
 kai kahum' lahai jō rāmahi-sō sāhiba, kai apanō bala jākē. 1.
 kai kalikāla karāla na sūjhata, mōha-māra-mada chākē.
 kai suni svāmi-subhā'u na rahyō cita, jō hita saba amṅa thākē. 2.
 haurṁ jānata bhalibhām'ti apanapau, prabhu-sō sun'yō na sākē.
 upala, bhīla, khaga, mṛga rajanīcara, bhalē bhayē karataba kākē. 3.
 mōkō bhalō rāma-nāma surataru-sō, rāmaprasāda kṛpālu kupākē.
 tulasī sukhī nisōca rāja jyōm bālaka māya-babākē. 4.

Verse no. 225—A person (who is in distress and is in need of solace and succour) will rely on someone else and seek support and help from others (bharōsō aura ā'ihai ura tākē) only if he has found another Lord who is either comparable to or better than Lord Sri Ram (kai kahum' lahai jō rāmahi-sō sāhiba). Also, if that person has enough strength and abilities himself, and has enough resources and wherewithal to take care of himself, then also he would not need any help and support from Lord Ram (kai apanō bala jākē).

[But Tulsidas says that as far as he is concerned, there is not a single Lord comparable to his dear Lord Ram to whom he can go to seek help of any kind. And neither does he have sufficient strength and abilities in himself to take care of his well-being. So therefore he says that let others do what they choose to do, but he, Tulsidas, will go no where else; he would remain steadfast and faithful and loyal to his dearest and most beloved Lord Ram who is the focus of all affection and devotion as far as Tulsidas is concerned. To wit and without any gainsay, Tulsidas asserts that his entire well-being and welfare rests in the hands of Lord Ram, and no one else. He is sure that the only source of his happiness and joy, of his peace and bliss is exclusively Lord Ram.] (1).

Besides the above reasons, a person would (leave Lord Ram and) go to take shelter and seek refuge with some other Lord (or God) only if he has become so stupid and deluded, so driven by lust and greed, or so numbed by his sense of false pride and haughtiness (mōha-māra-mada chākē) that he is unable to see (realise, understand) the ferocious effects of Kaliyug (that so much clouds his wisdom and rational thinking, and makes him so overwhelmingly deluded that he is unable to judge what is good and what is bad for him) (“kai kalikāla karāla na sūjhata”).

The other reason is that his mind is so stupefied and distracted by Kaliyug's negative effects that he does not remember the benevolent, munificent, merciful and beneficent nature, temperament and character of the Lord (Sri Ram) (kai suni svāmi-

subhā'u na rahyō cita) who is a well-wisher and a benefactor of all those who have become weary of trying all other means for attaining emancipation and salvation, and who have wandered everywhere else in vain in search of peace, tranquility and solace (jō hita saba am̐ga thākē).

[But Tulsidas avers that these conditions do not apply to him for he never forgets his Lord and his exceptionally merciful and benevolent nature even for a moment. Therefore, no matter what happens, Tulsidas would never go anywhere else to seek anything; he will always be at the holy feet of Lord Ram.] (2).

I (Tulsidas) am well aware of the meagre and inconsequential resources that I have at my command, of my limitations, and of the little efforts that I may have made for my welfare that were effectively as good as nothing (hauṁ jānata bhalibhām̐ti apanapau).

Besides this, I have not heard of any other Lord who has such a glorious reputation and universally acknowledged fame (as Lord Ram has) (prabhu-sō sun'yō na sākē) for being the most magnanimous, graceful, merciful and benignant Lord who would willingly and most cheerfully accept even those creatures who cannot claim to have any goodness and merit in themselves, who had done nothing good, praise-worthy and meritorious in their lives that would entitle them to any spiritual and worldly rewards (bhalē bhayē karataba kākē). [These creatures were deemed to be the greatest of perverts; they were big sinners, unrighteous, unscrupulous and wretched by all counts so much so that they had no scope or hope of ever getting redemption or salvation for themselves anywhere.]

(For instance—) What good, noble or virtuous deeds, actions or characters (bhalē bhayē karataba kākē) did the stone (Ahilya), the Bhil (Sabari), the bird (Jatau, Kaghbhusund), the golden deer (Marich)¹ and the demon (Vibhishan, brother of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka) do, or possess? (upala, bhīla, khaga, mrga rajanīcara)

[But Lord Sri Ram had liberated all of them gladly and without qualms; the Lord provided their souls liberation and deliverance; the Lord ensured that they got the benefit of emancipation and salvation in spite of them being sinful and lowly. Say then, is there any other Lord or God who can be compared to Lord Ram? Surely and positively I can vouchsafe that there is no other Lord or God either equivalent to or better than Lord Ram.] (3).

For me at least, Lord Sri Ram's holy name has become like a 'Kalpa Tree²', the all wish-fulfilling tree of Gods (mōkō bhalō rāma-nāma surataru-sō), and this is also has been made possible for me due to the great mercy, the grace and the kindness of Sri Ram (rāmaprasāda kṛpālu kupākē). [To wit, it is the Lord's graceful nature and mercy upon me, and not any result of my own efforts, that my mind has been able to focus its attention on the holy name of the Lord which effectively is like a heavenly Tree that fulfils all the wishes of a person. Had it not been for the Lord's mercy on me, it was next to impossible for me to access this treasure of happiness and spiritual well-being by relying solely upon my mind which I know to be so fickle and lustful that it gets easily tempted and deflected from its goal by the countless attractions and temptations of the world.]

But in the final analysis, having received this benediction and grace from the Lord, this Tulsidas has become as happy, contented and carefree (tulasī sukhī nisōca) as a child who lives in the realm of his parents, and is under their protection

and care (rāja jyōm bālaka māya-babākē). [A child lives happily and carefree in his home under the watchful eyes of his parents because the child knows that he has nothing to worry and fear about as long as his parent is by his side.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.

¹The demon Marich and the story of 'the golden deer': The deer referred to in the verse is Marich, the demon. He was Ravana's maternal uncle. He was sent by Ravana, under threat of life, as a decoy golden deer to Sri Ram's hermitage at Panchavati. Sita asked Sri Ram to go and fetch the animal for her, at which he went far away pursuing it. While dying, Marich had called out to Laxman. Fearing that Ram was in danger, Sita forced Laxman to leave the Ashram. Ravana came posing as a hermit and kidnapped Sita. This incident is narrated in Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 24—to Doha no. 27.

For other characters cited here, see notes of the following verses: for Ahilya—verse no. 43, stanza 3; for Sabari—verse no. 152, stanza no. 8; for Jatau—verse no. 57, stanza no. 3; for Kaagbhusund—verse no. 78, stanza no. 5; for Vibhishan—verse no. 145, stanza no. 2.

²Lord Ram and his holy name are like the Kalpa Tree—see the following verse also.]

Lord Śrī Rāma's Holy Name is like a Kalpa Tree

(226)

भरोसो जाहि दूसरो सो करो ।
मोको तो रामको नाम कलपतरु कलि कल्याण फरो ॥१॥
करम उपासन, ग्यान, बेदमत, सो सब भाँति खरो ।
मोहि तो 'सावनके अंधहि' ज्यों सूझत रंग हरो ॥२॥
चाटत रह्यो स्वान पातरि ज्यों कबहुँ न पेट भरो ।
सो हौं सुमिरत नाम—सुधारस पेखत परुसि धरो ॥३॥
स्वारथ औ परमारथ हू को नहि कुंजरो—नरो ।
सुनियत सेतु पयोधि पषाननि करि कपि—कटक तरो ॥४॥
प्रीति—प्रतीति जहाँ जाकी, तहँ ताको काज सरो ।
मेरे तो माय—बाप दोउ आखर, हौं सिसु—अरनि अरो ॥५॥
संकर साखि जो राखि कहौं कछु तौ जरि जीह गरो ।
अपनो भलो राम—नामहि ते तुलसिहि समुझि परो ॥६॥

(226)

bharōsō jāhi dūsarō sō karō.
mōkō tō rāmakō nāma kalapataru kali kalyāna pharō. 1.
karama upāsana, gyāna, bēdamata, sō saba bhām̐ti kharō.
mōhi tō 'sāvanakē andhahi' jyōm sūjhata raṅga harō. 2.
cāṭata rahyō svāna pātari jyōm kabahum̐ na pēṭa bharō.
sō hauṁ sumirata nāma-sudhārasa pēkhata parusi dharō. 3.
svāratha au paramāratha hū kō nahi kunjārō-narō.

suniyata sētu payōdhi paṣānani kari kapi-kaṭaka tarō. 4.
 prīti-pratīti jahām̐ jākī, tahām̐ tākō kāja sarō.
 mērē tō māya-bāpa dō'u ākhara, hauṁ sisu-arani arō. 5.
 saṅkara sākhi jō rākhi kahauṁ kachu tau jari jīha garō.
 apanō bhalō rāma-nāmahi tē tulasīhi samujhi parō. 6.

Verse no. 226—[This verse further elaborates on the idea expressed in the preceding verse no. 225—that Tulsidas relies exclusively on Lord Ram for all his worldly needs and spiritual goals. He does not seek anything from anyone else.]

If anyone wants, then let him go anywhere else to seek and find support, succour, solace and reliance from anyone he chooses (*bharōsō jāhi dūsarō sō karō*). As for me (Tulsidas), Lord Sri Ram's holy name is like a Kalpa Tree in Kaliyug as it bears fruits of auspiciousness, welfare and all round well-beings (*mōkō tō rāmakō nāma kalapataru kali kalyāna pharō*)¹.

[¹To wit, it is only by the good effects of the holy name of Lord Ram that I have become respected, honoured and praised in this world. I can now claim emancipation and salvation for myself, something that evaded me throughout my different births. Though I am totally worthless otherwise and possess aught naught anything that can be regarded as being meritorious, but it is the positive effects of the Lord's holy name that I can now say with confidence that I have a standing in this world, that I have a direct contact with the Lord who is the redeemer of the soul of all, and that I have finally found abiding peace and tranquility for myself and my soul.] (1).

Though it is true that the different paths for one's spiritual well-being and liberation that have been enumerated and sanctioned in the Vedas (*bēdamata*), such as 'Karma', 'Upasana' and 'Gyan'² (*karama upāsana, gyāna*) are all true and effective in every respect (*sō saba bhām̐ti kharō*), but for me they are all useless and meaningless like a man who becomes blind after having seen the greenery of the rainy season (*mōhi tō 'sāvanakē andhahi' jyōm sūjhata raṅga harō*)³.

[²The word 'Karma' means doing meritorious deeds for one's spiritual welfare. The word 'Upasana' means religious exercises such as offering of prayers, worship, devotion etc. that one undertakes for attaining his spiritual goals. And the word 'Gyan' refers to acquisition of wisdom and true knowledge for achieving the same goal. Tulsidas asserts that it is true that all these spiritual paths as outlined in the Vedas and other scriptures are definitely correct and effective, there is no doubt about it, but for him they mean nothing, for he has decided to rely upon Lord Ram and his holy name for all his worldly as well as spiritual needs and goals in life.

³A man who suddenly becomes blind after the rainy season will always remember the sight of the picturesque green fields, the trees laden with green leaves, colourful flowers and fruits, and the vibrant colours of Nature that he had last seen before he lost his sights. So even during the winter season or during droughts, if someone asks him to describe his surroundings, he would always cite the last scene of greenery he had seen before losing his sight. Tulsidas alludes to this metaphor to mean that he has become virtually 'blind' to, or un-interested in, all other means and sources that can help a person to attain spiritual welfare. He has chosen to rely exclusively on the mystical powers of the holy name of Lord Ram for all his spiritual as well as temporal needs.

Tulsidas avers that just like a blind man, who has lost his eyesight during the rainy season, sees or imagines that there is no other colour except green—the last colour he saw before becoming blind, so likewise he too sees no other help or succour for himself from any quarter other than Sri Ram.] (2).

Earlier I had roamed about like a dog who licks at discarded platters of food (*cāṭata rahyō svāna pātari jyōm*), but my hunger was never satisfied (*kabahum̐ na pēṭa bharō*).

But today I see nectar in front of me by virtue of remembering and chanting Lord Sri Ram's name so much so that I can partake of this nectar as much as I want (*sō haum̐ sumirata nāma-sudhārasa pēkhata parusi dharō*)⁴.

[⁴Tulsidas says that though he had enjoyed reasonable comforts in life earlier but he had never found permanent contentment and an abiding sense of fulfilment anywhere at any time. Though he had had happiness and joy on many occasions, but they were all transient and gross in nature. True and complete happiness, joy, bliss and tranquility of a sublime nature had always eluded me. Now he feels so fortunate that just by remembering the Lord's holy name, he has discovered an eternal fount of bliss and beatitude as if a bowl of sweet nectar had been offered to him on a platter. In other words, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation is there for him for the asking. He can access them whenever he so wishes. But he says that at present he wishes to enjoy sucking and sipping at the sweet nectar of bliss and contentedness that comes with remembering the Lord and his holy name.] (3).

For me, Lord Sri Ram's holy name is a means to serve both my ends—i.e. it serves my interests in this temporal world by making me happy and blissful, and at the same time it ensures my spiritual welfare by providing me with the reward of the final liberation and deliverance from the bondage of this world and the endless cycle of transmigration of my soul (*svāratha au paramāratha hū kō*).

In all sooth and without gainsay, I am very definite and positive about what I say; it is not like the confusion that was created (during the epic war of the Mahabharat) when it was declared that ‘an elephant’ had been killed in the battle-field (*nahi kunjārō-narō*)⁵.

[⁵This alludes to the incident in Mahabharat war when cunning, treachery and half-truths were used to cheat the opposing side. An elephant whose name resembled that of a warrior named Aswathama was killed, and it was made to appear that the warrior himself had died. This story is outlined in brief at the end of this verse.]

I have heard about the marvellous mystical powers and the tremendous potentials of the holy name of the Lord (Ram) that says that the monkey-army had constructed a wonderous floating bridge of stones (boulders) on the mighty ocean and had crossed it effortlessly (to reach the demon capital of Lanka). (*suniyata sētu payōdhi paṣānani kari kapi-kaṭaka tarō*)⁶.

[⁶The holy name of Lord Ram was etched by Hanuman, the monkey warrior, on each stone before it was thrown on the water of the ocean. Instead of sinking, these stones floated to form a bridge from the shore of the mainland to the island capital of Lanka where the demons had ensnared Sita, the wife of Lord Ram. The most remarkable and astonishing thing is the fact that the ferocious and turbulent ocean, with its powerful buffeting, heaving and splashing waves that could even capsize huge ships or turn them turtle, could not dismantle this bridge. The ocean was forced to be tamed itself. Such is the glory of the Lord's holy name that heavy

boulders could float on the rough and choppy waters of the ocean as if they were light planks of wood or small balls of paper.] (4).

It is said that a person is able to achieve what he desires if he has a firm faith and conviction in the path he adopts or follows for the fulfilment of his desired goal. This will be possible only when he loves and enjoys the path he follows (and does not treat it as a burden thrust upon him)—because then he won't be distracted, and his faith and commitment would help him to achieve success (*prīti-pratīti jahāṃ'jākī, taham' tākō kāja sarō*).

Following this principle I can say honestly and with conviction that for me the two syllables 'Ra' and 'Ma' of Lord Sri Ram's holy name "RAM" are like my parents (the former representing my 'father' and the latter representing my 'mother') (*mērē tō māya-bāpa dō'u ākhara*)⁷.

[⁷To wit, I am so firm in my beliefs and convinced beyond doubt that the holy name of Lord Ram will surely and certainly take good care of me and all my needs, whether related to my welfare in this temporal world or to the welfare of my spiritual future. This being the case, I need not follow any other paths as devised by the Vedas and outlined in stanza no. 2 herein above.]

This is the reason why I have determined to stubbornly remain at the holy feet of Lord Ram just like a child stubbornly seeks something from his parent and refuses to move away till his wishes are granted (*haum' sisu-arani arō*)⁸.

[⁸To wit, I will stick to my demand of seeking liberation and deliverance by the virtue of the grace of Lord Ram and his holy name, and would not divert my mind and attention from my goal no matter what temptations are proffered to me. I wot naught aught else; I know of no other Lord or spiritual paths other than this.] (5).

If I tell a lie or have any kind of pretensions, deceit and falsehood when I say what I say, or if I conceal anything, then honestly, with Lord Shiva as a witness (*saṅkara sākhi jō rākhi kahauṃ kachu*), let my tongue get either be burnt or fall out in guilt (*tau jari jīha garō*)⁹.

[⁹To wit, what I have been saying in all these verses are not merely fanciful flights of my imagination as a poet who would be inclined to employ hyperbole to say what he wishes to say, but it is an expression of the actual state of affairs.]

I (Tulsidas) have come to understand and am convinced that my welfare, my well-being and my good lies only with the holy name of Lord Sri Ram (*apanō bhalō rāma-nāmaḥi tē tulasīhi samujhi parō*) (6).

[Note—⁵The story of Aswathama: During the Mahabharat war, Dronacharya was fighting ferociously on behalf of the Kaurav's and started creating havoc in the Pandava army. It was felt necessary to kill him, but Arjun refused because the former had been his teacher. So, Krishna used a trick. He asked Bheem to kill an elephant called Aswathama, which also happened to be the name of Dronacharya's son whom he loved dearly. When the news reached him, in order to confirm its veracity, Dronacharya asked Yudhisthir, who was renowned for his truthfulness. The latter replied, 'Aswathama had died, man or elephant...']

But before the words 'or elephant' could be pronounced, Krishna blew his conch so loudly that the words were inaudible to Dronacharya. Shocked at the possibility of the death of his beloved son, he fainted. Then Dhrista Dhumna (धृष्ट द्युम्ना) cut off his head. Ever since this event, the phrase 'Ashwathama, man or elephant' has been used to denote 'half truths', or deceitful, cunning, tricky utterances and dubious behaviour.]

Lord Rāma's Holy Name is the only Benefactor of all Living-beings, and a
Bestower of Welfare

(227)

नाम राम रावरोई हित मेरे ।
स्वारथ—परमारथ साथिन्ह सों भुज उठाइ कहौं टेरे ॥1॥
जननी—जनक तज्यो जनमि, करम बिनु बिधिहु सृज्यो अवडेरै ।
मोहूसों कोउ—कोउ कहत रामहि को, सो प्रसंग केहि केरे ॥2॥
फिस्थौ ललात बिनु नाम उदर लागि, दुखउ दुखित मोहि हेरे ।
नाम—प्रसाद लहत रसाल—फल अब हौं बबुर बहेरे ॥3॥
साधत साधु लोक—परलोकहि, सुनि गुनि जतन घनेरे ।
तुलसीके अवलंब नामको, एक गाँठि कइ फेरे ॥4॥

(227)

nāma rāma rāvarō'i hita mērē.
svāratha-paramāratha sāthinha sōm bhuja uṭhā'i kahaurṁ ṭērē. 1.
jananī-janaka tajyō janami, karama binu bidhihu srjyō avaḍērē.
mōhumśōm kō'u-kō'u kahata rāmahi kō, sō prasaṅga kēhi kērē. 2.
phiraīau lalāta binu nāma udara lagi, dukha'u dukhita mōhi hērē.
nāma-prasāda lahata rasāla-phala aba haurṁ babura bahērē. 3.
sādhata sādhu lōka-paralōkahi, suni guni jatana ghanērē.
tulasikē avalamba nāmakō, ēka gāmṭhi ka'i phērē. 4.

Verse no. 227—Oh Lord Sri Ram! In all sooth and without gainsay, your lordship's holy name is my only well-wisher, my true benefactor and the exclusive source wherein lies my all-round well-being (nāma rāma rāvarō'i hita mērē)—I declare this fact loudly without reservations and with my arms raised as a token of my utmost honesty, sincerity and conviction when I make this proclamation (bhuja uṭhā'i kahaurṁ ṭērē) to everyone, to all my acquaintances (sāthinha sōm), those who have some kind of personal vested interest in keeping acquaintance with me (e.g., my family members) as well as those who are not related to me and have only a spiritual interest with me (e.g., saints, spiritual seekers, pious persons, and those who seek the Truth) (svāratha-paramāratha) (1).

I am so exceedingly unfortunate that my parents had abandoned me as soon as I was born (jananī-janaka tajyō janami); even the creator Brahma had destined nothing good for me and had made me anamolous and unfit for the world (karama binu bidhihu srjyō avaḍērē)¹.

[¹To wit, Brahma did not provide anything in my fate that can be regarded as good and beneficial for me. I am very poor and lack all wherewithals that a person would need for leading a reasonably comfortable and respectable life in this world. The creator even tweaked my mind to such an extent that my thinking process is regarded as being unconventional by others around me in the world. Even my peers and those I might consider my friends are at odds with me.]

Inspite of this oddity and my grave ill-fortune, some people still prefer to call me a ‘follower or devotee of Lord Sri Ram’ (which is a rare honour for a lowly and ill-fated man like me) (*mōhumśōm kō'u-kō'u kahata rāmahi kō*). I wonder why do they call me so; what is the reason (for extending this privilege and honour to me though I think I do not deserve it; I am really baffled)? (*sō prasaṅga kēhi kērē*)².

[²Surely, to be called a ‘follower or a devotee of the Lord’ is an honour and a privilege reserved only for the most pious and holy of men, which I think I am not. But since people do address me in this way, it is obviously due to the good influences of Lord Sri Ram's holy name that I am given this honour, because I keep on repeating the Lord's name inspite of being deprived of all other goodness and virtues that a man worthy of such an honour is expected to possess.] (2).

[Till the time I had taken refuge in the name of Sri Ram—] I had to wander like an unknown and unrecognised vagrant, a vagabond who had no identity of his own (*binu nāma*), wistfully searching from door to door for morsels of food to fill my hungry stomach (*phiraīau lalāta udara lagi*).

My condition was so miserable, so wretched and so pitiful that even ‘sorrow’ despaired at it; even ‘misery’ felt miserable when it saw me (*dukha'u dukhita mōhi hērē*).

But look at the wonder of all wonders that by the grace and kindness of Lord Sri Ram (*nāma-prasāda lahata*), the trees of ‘Babul’ (Acacia) and ‘Bahera’ (belleric myrobalan) have started bearing fruits of mango for me (*rasāla-phala aba hauṁ babura bahērē*)³!

[³To wit, the world which was full of torments and miseries for me and had always abhorred and detested me, has now become hospitable, welcoming, compatible and pleasant for me once I decided to surrender my self at the holy feet of Lord Ram, and regard the Lord and his holy name as my only source of succour and solace and true benefactor. What was once a miserable life for me when I had not even sufficient food to feed my hungry stomach, and was sneered and rebuked and derided and rejected wherever I went, now for me, thanks to the Lord and his holy name, it is an honourable life, when the same people who abhorred me once have started showing respect to me even as they welcome me with a smile—because they now regard me as a ‘devotee and follower of Lord God Sri Ram, the Supreme Lord of the world’. What a miracle and a change is this indeed! It only goes to show the stupendity of the divine powers possessed by the ‘Name of the Lord’, and its astounding glories and mystical benefits.] (3).

Those who are saintly, pious, wise and learned are able to ensure a good future for themselves by the virtue of hearing the scriptures, following the auspicious path prescribed by them, and practicing the principles devised by them for one's all-round well-being, both in the temporal world for as long as they live in it as well as for their spiritual welfare by attaining emancipation and salvation (*sādhata sādhu lōka-paralōkahi, suni guni jatana ghanērē*).

But truly and honestly and without gainsay, as far as Tulsidas is concerned, there is only one support for him and there is only one single source from which all his good and welfare can be derived—and it is the ‘holy name of Lord Ram’ (*tulasikē avalamba nāmakō*).

Just like the case when any given number of threads can be tied together by a single knot, this device of Lord Ram's holy name helps one to tie together the benefits obtained by following different paths as proscribed in the scriptures with the objective of attaining one's temporal and spiritual goals as well as all-round welfare and well-being (*ēka gāmṭhi ka'i phērē*)⁴.

[⁴All the threads will fall apart if the knot is untied. Likewise, all the different spiritual and religious paths devised and prescribed in the scriptures will come to a naught if there is no name of Lord Ram in any of them. All efforts undertaken by an aspirant or seeker would be in vain if he does not take the support of Lord Ram's holy name as the basic and necessary ingredient of his religious and spiritual practices.] (4).

Lord Rāma's Divine Name is Superior to Śrī Rāma himself

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प्रिय रामनामतें जाहि न रामो ।
ताको भलो कठिन कलिकालहुँ आदि-मध्य-परिनामो ॥1॥
सकुचत समुझि नाम-महिमा मद-लोभ-मोह-कोह-कामो ।
राम-नाम-जप-निरत सुजन पर करत छाँह घोर घामो ॥2॥
नाम-प्रभाउ सही जो कहै कोउ सिला सरोरुह जामो ।
जो सुनि सुमिरि भाग-भाजन भइ सुकृतसील भील-भामो ॥3॥
बालमीकि-अजामिलके कछु हुतो न साधन सामो ।
उलटे पलटे नाम-महातम गुंजनि जितो ललामो ॥4॥
रामतें अधिक नाम-करतब, जेहि किये नगर-गत गामो ।
भये बजाइ दाहिने जो जपि तुलसिदाससे बामो ॥5॥

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priya rāmanāmatēm jāhi na rāmō.
tākō bhalō kaṭhina kalikālahum' ādi-madhya-parināmō. 1.
sakucata samujhi nāma-mahimā mada-lōbha-mōha-kōha-kāmō.
rāma-nāma-japa-nirata sujana para karata chāmḥa ghōra ghāmō. 2.
nāma-prabhā'u sahī jō kahai kō'u silā sarōruha jāmō.
jō suni sumiri bhāga-bhājana bha'i sukṛtasīla bhīla-bhāmō. 3.
bālamīki-ajāmilakē kachu hutō na sādhana sāmō.
ulaṭē palatē nāma-mahātama guṇjani jitō lalāmō. 4.
rāmatēm adhika nāma-karataba, jēhi kiyē nagara-gata gāmō.
bhayē bajā'i dāhinē jō japi tulasidāsasē bāmō. 5.

Verse no. 228—Those who have greater faith, greater love, greater affection and greater devotion for Lord Sri Ram's (holy and divine) “Name” as compared to the “Lord himself” (*priya rāmanāmatēm jāhi na rāmō*)—such persons are sure to have auspiciousness, welfare, well-being and all good fortunes ensured for themselves in

this fierce and wild era known as Kaliyug—whether it relates to their past, their present or their future (tākō bhalō kaṭhina kalikālahum' ādi-madhyā-parināmō)¹.

[¹When given a choice between “Lord Sri Ram’s physical form” as the Supreme Being personified and his “Holy and Divine Name”, Tulsidas advises all living beings to opt for the latter. This practical and spiritual gem-of-an-advice has been described in great details by the poet in his epic book called the ‘Ram Charit Manas’ in its Baal Kand 1/19/1-1/28/2, and more specifically verses bearing nos. 1/23, 1/25, 1/26. Further, this is the nut-shell philosophy and the spiritual maxim enunciated in the ‘Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad’.

To wit, Tulsidas says that suppose one is given a choice that if he discards the ‘Name’ and chooses to worship the physical form of Lord Ram then he would stand to gain, then a wise person would reject this offer and opt to have devotion for the ‘Name of the Lord’ as opposed to the ‘physical form of the Lord’. One obvious and practical reason is that while anyone, no matter how powerful and able he may be or may even be a personified form of some God, has some sort of limitation in this gross world because he has a physical body that is essentially gross like the rest of the things in this world. Therefore, with a gross body that is bound by the laws of Nature, anyone, even Lord Ram, cannot override and overrule the limitations that time and age and space impose on all things with a gross mortal body. On the contrary, the ‘Name’ of any God or deity is a ‘word’ that consists of sound, and therefore it is free from such limitations as witnessed by a gross entity like the physical body of any deity. This ‘sound’ element in the ‘Name of Lord Ram’ is extremely subtle and sublime; it is transcendental in nature as it is not limited to any specific period of time, age and space unlike the gross physical form of Lord Ram who lived in a particular age called Treta Yuga. Even the Lord’s idol is a gross form, and surely this form is definitely not as subtle and sublime as the ‘sound’ which is the basis of the Lord’s Name.

The Lord’s holy name can be invoked by anyone at any time and under any circumstance, with no formalities needed to do so, whereas worshipping a physical form of the Lord such as an idol requires a lot of formalities and adherence to the rigours of religious practices with so many dos and don’ts.] (1).

Taking into account the glory, the fame and the potential powers of the holy name of Lord Sri Ram, miscreants symbolising negative traits, vices and evils, such as ‘mada’^a, ‘lōbha’^b, ‘mōha’^c, ‘kōha’^d and ‘kāṁō’^e—all of them become hesitant and reluctant to harass the person who repeats the holy name of Lord Ram (sakucata samujhi nāma-mahimā). These miscreants do not gather courage to even come in the front of such a person who says the name of the Lord.

For those people who constantly and consistently chant Sri Ram’s holy name, even the rays of the scorching sun transform into a shadow that gives them shade from its heat (rāma-nāma-japa-nirata sujana para karata chāmṛha ghōra ghāmō)².

[²To wit, just like an umbrella that provides a shade from the scorching heat of the sun to a person who holds it in his hands, a person who takes the shelter of Lord Ram’s holy name by constantly repeating it is given protection from all sorts of miseries and torments associated with life in this world. All his sorrows and tribulations are turned into pleasant experiences.] (2).

^aPride/haughtiness/arrogance/ego.

^bGreed/avarice/wistfulness.

^cIgnorance/delusions/attachments/allurements.

^dAnger/wrath/malice/discord/vengeance.

^eLust/passion/desire/infatuation.}

If anyone says that a lotus flower has sprouted and bloomed from a stone when someone invoked the holy name of Lord Ram and wished this to be so, then one should believe it to be true (nāma-prabhā'u sahī jō kahai kō'u silā sarōruha jāmō)³.

[³This is because even something that is impossible and unimaginable can become miraculously possible and feasible due to the marvellous and wonderful effects of the mystical powers of Lord Sri Ram's holy and divine Name.]

Even the Bhil (tribal) woman (“bhīla-bhāmō”—known as Sabari, who was otherwise lowly and outcaste in the society) had become most blessed and fortunate, was regarded as possessing most virtuous characters, and had become most revered (bhāga-bhājana bha'i sukr̥tasīla) because she had heard about the divine glories of the name of Lord Ram and had been repeating it constantly and consistently in her life (jō suni sumiri) (3).

Valmiki and Ajamil had no spiritual resources and means by which they could have ever expected to attain liberation and deliverance for themselves (bālamiki-ajāmilakē kachu hutō na sādhana sāmō), but both of them had relied on the stupendous mystical abilities and astounding divine powers inherent in the holy name of the Lord that by repeating it in any manner as they could, even uttering it topsy-turvy and without knowing its true value or realising its spiritual potentials (ulaṭē palaṭē nāma-mahātama)⁴, they were able to gain access to a priceless jewel (such as a pearl) from such a worthless thing as an oyster (guṇjani jītō lalāmō)⁵.

[⁴Both Valmiki and Ajamil were sinful persons. They had no faith in the Lord or his holy name. But as destined by Destiny, they got liberation and deliverance from their sinful life by uttering Lord Ram's holy name. Valmiki had repeated the holy name RAMA in the reverse order, i.e. as MARA, but when it was constantly repeated the word sounded as 'Rama', and thus it transformed into a Mantra. Ajamil had called out to his son named 'Narayan' when he panicked at the sight of the ferocious form of the messengers of Yam, the God of death, who had come to take him to hell at the time of his death. But since this word also happened to be the name of Lord Vishnu, the Lord's own messengers thought that Ajamil was calling out to their Lord, Vishnu. So they rushed to afford him protection from the torments inflicted by Yam's messengers, and took him to heaven.

Refer also to verse no. 151, stanza no 7; verse no. 156, stanza no 2; verse no. 247, stanza no 3 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' which reiterate this point.

⁵By citing the example of the “oyster” which produces a pearl though it is a sticky, slimy and worthless creature, Tulsidas says that even the most useless and dishonourable persons such as Valmiki and Ajamil, who had done nothing that would give them the right to liberation and deliverance because they were sinful in their previous life, had not only become praiseworthy but attained salvation and emancipation when they had taken the refuge of the holy name of Lord Ram.] (4).

The potential, power, strength, good effect and influence of Sri Ram's holy name have a wider and far reaching import, significance and importance than Lord Sri Ram himself (rāmatēm adhika nāma-karataba)⁶.

[⁶Even to access the Lord himself, one needs to address the Lord by his name! Surely this is obvious—because when someone’s name is called out, he immediately pays attention to the caller.]

This name of the Lord has made even those who were illiterate and uncultured into literate and wise persons just like the case of a rustic and ignorant village-folk being converted into a cultured and clever city-dweller due to some good contacts he makes (*jēhi kiyē nagara-gata gāmō*)⁷.

[⁷To wit, those who repeated the holy name of Lord Ram became as worthy of praise and respect as those who had studied the scriptures and were experts in their doctrines even though the former had no education at all.]

Tulsidas asserts that even the most wretched, evil, vile and sinful fellows like him have become worthy and wise relying solely upon the holy name of the Lord—and he makes this proclamation by beating a drum publicly (*bhayē bajā'i dāhinē jō japi tulasidāsasē bāmō*)⁸.

[⁸Say, what more proof would anyone need to establish the glory of the holy name of Lord Ram when one considers the live example of Tulsidas himself who lived in this era of Kaliyug even if one is not certain about others, such as Sabari, Valmiki and Ajamil because they lived in an age long gone by.] (5).

Śrī Rāma is my only Lord

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गरैगी जीह जो कहौ औरको हौं ।
 जानकी—जीवन! जनम—जनम जग ज्यायो तिहारेहि कौरको हौं ।।1।।
 तीनि लोक, तिहुँ काल न देखत सुहृद रावरे जोरको हौं ।
 तुमसों कपट करि कलप—कलप कृमि हैहौं नरक घोरको हौं ।।2।।
 कहा भयो जो मन मिलि कलिकालहिं कियो भौतुवा भौरको हौं ।
 तुलसिदास सीतल नित यहि बल, बड़े ठेकाने ठौरको हौं ।।3।।

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garaigī jīha jō kahauṁ aurakō hauṁ.
jānakī-jīvana! janama-janama jaga jyāyō tihārēhi kaurakō hauṁ. 1.
tīni lōka, tihum̐ kāla na dēkhata suhr̥da rāvarē jōrakō hauṁ.
tumasōṁ kapaṭa kari kalapa-kalapa kṛmi hvaihauṁ naraka ghōrakō hauṁ. 2.
kahā bhayō jō mana mili kalikālahim̐ kiyō bhauntuvā bhaunrakō hauṁ.
tulasidāsa sītala nita yahi bala, baṛē ṭhēkānē ṭhaurakō hauṁ. 3.

Verse no. 229—Let my tongue decay and fall out of my mouth (as a curse and punishment) if I ever happen to say that I belong to anyone else except Lord Sri Ram (*garaigī jīha jō kahauṁ aurakō hauṁ*)¹.

[¹Tulsidas asserts that Lord Sri Ram is his only Lord, and no one else is. He says that he is the Lord’s ardent and most faithful follower and servant, and he owes his allegiance exclusively the Lord. Tulsidas declares: “If I ever say, even inadvertently and under any pressure, that I have someone other than Lord Ram as my

patron and benefactor, then let my tongue be afflicted with some form of severe disease and fall-off my mouth as a punishment for speaking an utter lie and betraying the Lord.”]

Oh Janki-Jeevan (i.e., Lord Ram who is dearest-as-life for Sita, his divine consort—“*jānakī-jīvana*”)! In all my previous countless births that I took in this mortal world, and even in the present one, I have always survived on the morsels of food that you had so graciously granted to me (*janama-janama jaga jyāyō tihārēhi kaurakō haum*)².

[²To wit, it was your mercy and grace that has prevented me from dying of hunger. Whatever I had and whatever comfort and happiness I enjoyed was because of your benevolence and kindness upon me. So, how can I be so disloyal and unfaithful to you so as to deny that you are my sole Lord and benefactor? I may be a sinner, but I cannot stoop to such a low level of character.] (1).

[My experience tells me that—] In all the three Lokas or worlds (subterranean, terrestrial, heaven; or the heaven, the hell, and the mortal world on the earth) and the three periods of time (past, present, future), I have not seen or found a more friendly, selfless, benignant, benevolent, munificent, kind, affectionate and endearing Lord than you are (*tīni lōka, tihum̐ kāla na dēkhata suhr̥da rāvarē jōrakō haum*).

I say this most honestly, truly and without any vested interests. Oh Lord, if I speak a lie to you and talk with cunning and deceit in my mind when I address you (*tumasōm̐ kapaṭa kari*), then let me become an insect or a worm in the fierce hell for numerous Kalpas (*kalapa-kalapa kṛmi hvaihaum̐ naraka ghōrakō haum*)³!

[³To wit, if I am falsifying or exaggerating facts to appease you, or to pretend for the world that I am a great devotee of Lord Ram and a pious person so that the people would honour me and show respect to me, if what I say is not the absolute truth, then oh Lord, let me suffer the worst form of life in hell for countless eras and for a very long period of time as a punishment.] (2).

What happens (i.e. how does it matter at all) if ‘Kaliyug’ (the present era of delusions, perversions, evil tendencies and spiritual ignorance) has turned my mind into the froth or the scum that is found floating on the surface of a whirlpool in an ocean (*kahā bhayō jō mana mili kalikālahim̐ kiyō bhauntuvā bhaunrakō haum*)⁴?

[⁴Even as the froth or the scum found on the surface of the water in the ocean remains afloat in the eddy currents of a whirlpool and never sinks in it, so will I also keep afloat in this vicious river-like mundane world without getting drowned in or sucked in its whirlpool of worldly delusions, endless temptations, lusts, perversions and other vices such as attachments to and infatuations with the sense objects, anger, greed, arrogance, etc. Oh Lord, by the blessings of your grace and mercy, I shall be able to remain unaffected by and immune to one and all negativities associated with life in this gross material world. Though I might appear to be influenced by these negativities externally, but internally I shall be free from them—thanks to your grace upon me.]

Tulsidas says that he always remains very calm and composed because he is certain that he is a member of the Great Court of Lord Ram (i.e. a devotee and a protectee of the Lord), and therefore has nothing to worry about and get perturbed (*tulasidāsa sītala nita yahi bala, barē ṭhēkānē ṭhaurakō haum*)⁵.

[⁵To wit, Tulsidas says that he is unperturbed by the moral and spiritual upheaval, depravations, distractions and corruptions unleashed on all the living beings

in the present era known as ‘Kaliyug’—because he has a noble pedigree as he belongs to the great tradition of devotees of Lord Ram who possess excellent characters and virtues, and are never affected by the evil influences of Kaliyug. He also remains calm because he is rest assured that no harm can ever come to him, and that his welfare and well-being are taken good care by the Lord, Sri Ram. A person is usually troubled when he is tormented by an uncertain future and also when he is not sure where to go for help and succour in times of need. In the case of Tulsidas, there is surely no such occasion for worries as he has Lord Ram over his head as his patron Lord who would always extend his umbrella of protection for Tulsidas.] (3).

Lord Rāma is a selfless Benefactor and Well-wisher of all

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अकारन को हितू और को है ।
 विरद ‘गरीब-निवाज’ कौनको, भौंह जासु जन जोहै ।।1।।
 छोटो-बड़ो चहत सब स्वार्थ, जो बिरंचि बिरचो है ।
 कोल कुटिल, कपि-भालु पालिबो कौन कृपालुहि सोहै ।।2।।
 काको नाम अनख आलस कहें अघ अबगुननि बिछोहै ।
 को तुलसीसे कुसेवक संग्रह्यो, सठ सब दिन साईं द्रोहै ।।3।।

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akārana kō hitū aura kō hai.
 virada ‘garība-nivāja’ kaunakō, bhaunha jāsu jana jōhai. 1.
 chōṭō-barō cahata saba svāratha, jō birañci biracō hai.
 kōla kuṭila, kapi-bhālu pālibō kauna kṛpāluhi sōhai. 2.
 kākō nāma anakha ālasa kahēm agha abagunani bichōhai.
 kō tulasīsē kusēvaka saṅgrahyō, saṭha saba dina sā’im drōhai. 3.

Verse no. 230—Who else (besides Lord Sri Ram) is a selfless and the best benefactor and well-wisher (of all living beings)? (akārana kō hitū aura kō hai)

Who has the peerless reputation of being extremely kind, benevolent and munificent, of being a provider of all welfare for those who are poor, wretched, downtrodden and miserable (virada ‘garība-nivāja’ kaunakō) so much so that devotees constantly gaze (i.e., fix their attention on) his merciful and graceful eyebrows (expecting that the Lord would glance at them at least once as this would ensure the end of all their miseries, troubles and tribulations) (bhaunha jāsu jana jōhai) (1).

All the creatures created by Brahma, the creator of this world (jō birañci biracō hai), whether such creatures are small or big, important or unimportant, animate or unanimate, and consisting of all forms and temperaments (chōṭō-barō)—all of them act in a way that would help them meet their own self-interest to a lesser or greater

degree (i.e., no one helps anyone without expecting anything in return that would serve one's self-interest, directly or indirectly) (*chōṭō-barō cahata saba svāratha*).

Say, which master or lord would find it glorious and worthwhile to take care of and sustain Bhils (tribals), Kapi (monkeys), Bhalu (bears) and others of their kind (except Lord Sri Ram)? (*kōla kuṭila, kapi-bhālu pālibō kauna krpāluhi sōhai*)¹.

[¹To wit, no king or lord would bother to pay attention to lowly persons teeming in his vast kingdom. He would, at best, neglect them, if not persecuting them and throwing them out of his kingdom on one pretext or the other. He would not like to waste the resources of his kingdom on such lowly and good-for-nothing subjects of his kingdom who are mere burdens on his exchequer and the society. But Lord Ram knows that no one would care for such lowly living beings if he too neglects them. Being merciful and benevolent by nature, Lord Ram makes certain that he takes special care of those who are cared by none others. This is the outstanding quality of the Lord—that he is a patron and an angel guardian of all those who have no where to go.] (2).

Whose name has such glorious spiritual potentials and mystical powers that by merely taking it even with enmity, anger, malice or discord, or with indifference and indignance (*kākō nāma anakha ālasa kahēm*), it would automatically remove the negative and demeaning effects on the creature that are caused by the countless sins, vices, evils, faults and all other negative and detestable qualities of unrighteousness, unscrupulousness, perversions, et al. that he possesses (*agha abagunani bichōhai*)? [To wit, only Lord Ram's holy and divine name has this unique quality.]

Imagine, the Lord (Sri Ram) has even accepted and taken good care of such a wicked and wretched servant (devotee, follower) as Tulsidas who is so utterly stupid and lowly (*kō tulasīsē kusēvaka saṅgrahyō saṭha*) that he had always harboured animosity and malice towards his Lord (*saba dina sām drōhai*).

{Verily, what more can I (or anyone else in my place) expect from a Lord? What more benevolence, benignance and munificence can anyone show towards his servant, follower or subordinate?}²

[²Tulsidas says that one can judge Lord Ram's extremely forgiving, accommodating, gracious and merciful nature if one sees the example of Tulsidas himself. He had never done anything worthwhile in his life, and had uttered the name of Lord Ram only as a means to feed his stomach because he knew that if he said 'Ram' people would give him food as charity. He had never uttered this holy name with an attitude of worship or for the purpose of his spiritual welfare. But the Lord is so kind and mindful of his own reputation that he thought if he didn't take care of Tulsidas then his own reputation would suffer—because the world hears Tulsidas uttering the name of the Lord, albeit it is not for any form of worship or spiritual purpose or prayer but to feed his stomach and fulfil his worldly needs, but nevertheless the fact is that the Lord's name is being invoked by him, and if the Lord neglects him and Tulsidas suffers in the least then it would send a wrong signal to the world. The world would say that Lord Ram does not qualify for being honoured for all his glorious virtues for which the world pays its respects to him, and that the Lord's name has no divine powers because in spite of repeating it constantly and over and over again, Tulsidas still continues to suffer. So it becomes obligatory for Lord Ram to ensure Tulsidas' all-round welfare.

Howbeit, irrespective of the reason why Lord Ram decided to offer his grace to Tulsidas, the fact remains that he did so even when the beneficiary of such grace, i.e. Tulidas, was not eligible for it. This example should be used by all others who suffer in this world—that if they say Lord Ram’s name, no matter why or how they say it, then they are assured of all-round good and welfare.] (3).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

What does Tulasīdāsa want

(231)

और मोहि को है, काहि कहिहौं?
 रंक—राज ज्यों मनको मनोरथ, केहि सुनाइ सुख लहिहौं ।।1।।
 जम—जातना, जोनि—संकट सब सहे दुसह अरु सहिहौं ।
 मोको अगम, सुगम तुमको प्रभु, तउ फल चारि न चहिहौं ।।2।।
 खेलिबेको खग—मृग, तरु—कंकर है रावरो राम हौं रहिहौं ।
 यहि नाते नरकहुँ सचु, या बिनु परमपदहुँ दुख दहिहौं ।।3।।
 इतनी जिय लालसा दासके, कहत पानही गहिहौं ।
 दीजै बचन कि हृदय आनिये 'तुलसीको पन निर्बहिहौं' ।।4।।

(231)

aura mōhi kō hai, kāhi kahihauṁ?
 raṅka-rāja jyōṁ manakō manōratha, kēhi sunā'i sukha lahihauṁ. 1.
 jama-jātanā, jōni-saṅkaṭa saba sahē dusaha aru sahihauṁ.
 mōkō agama, sugama tumakō prabhu, ta'u phala cāri na cahihauṁ. 2.
 khēlibēkō khaga-mṛga, taru-kaṅkara hvai rāvarō rāma hauṁ rahihauṁ.
 yahi nātē narakahūṁ sacū, yā binu paramapadahūṁ dukha dahihauṁ. 3.
 itanī jiya lālasā dāsakē, kahata pānahī gahihauṁ.
 dījai bacana ki hṛdaya āniyē 'tulasīkō pana nirbahihauṁ'. 4.

Verse no. 231—Who else (besides you, my dear Lord Sri Ram) can I call “mine”; who else in this world can I truly call “my Lord”, and therefore before who else can I talk and divulge the secrets of my heart and my hidden wishes? [Or, I have no one else before whom I can open my heart and talk freely, and in whom I can confide.] (aura mōhi kō hai, kāhi kahihauṁ?).

My mind has an incongruous desire to transform myself into a king from my present state of being a pauper (raṅka-rāja jyōṁ manakō manōratha)¹.

[¹To wit, though I understand and am aware of my present condition as being so wretched, mean and humble that I have not the least resource or ability to attain the glorious goal of having bliss and salvation which comes to one who has done great religious and spiritual merit in life, but ironically I hope to achieve that exalted state

which would make it possible for me to attain one-ness with the Supreme Lord represented by Lord Ram.]

To whom should I describe my lofty ambitions and feel contented and happy that my wishes would be fulfilled. [Oh Lord, tell me, who would bother to listen to my rants except you?] (kēhi sunā'i sukha lahihaum̐) (1).

[Now listen my Lord—] I have already suffered the torments and miseries of hell, and I have already undergone immense tribulations and agonies through the different births I had to take till now, and would have to take in the future as well. (But I am not bothered about it.) (jama-jātanā, jōni-saṅkaṭa saba sahē dusaha aru sahihaum̐).

Oh Lord! I do not even dare to desire and ever hope to have the four great and coveted rewards^a that are usually bestowed upon all who are deemed to be religiously meritorious, and thus eligible for them (because I am totally unworthy to receive any one of them). Though it is easy and effortless for you to grant me all of them if you so wish, but oh Lord, I don't want them at all. (mōkō agama, sugama tumakō prabhu, ta'u phala cāri na cahihaum̐)².

[²To wit, even if you wish to grant me all of these four rewards, I would not like to accept them—because what I want is something different. I am telling you my secret wish herein below in the next stanza.

^aThe four rewards for a meritorious life mentioned here are the following: 'Artha' (wealth, prosperity), 'Dharma' (the benefits of righteousness and noble virtues), 'Kaam' (lust, desires, fulfilled wishes) and 'Moksha' (salvation, bliss, beatitude, liberation from the mundane world and the cycle of birth and death).] (2).

Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāvarō rāma)! [The true and internal desire of my heart is quite different. So, what are they?] I want to become a plaything (or puppet) in your hands—such as a toy bird, a toy animal, and even stones or pebbles (e.g., marbles, with which children play around). (khēlibēkō khaga-mrga, taru-kaṅkara hvai haum̐ rahihaum̐).

If this happens, I will have peace and happiness even in a fierce hell (yahi nātē narakahum̐ sacu). Otherwise, in its absence, or denied this privilege of becoming a toy in your hands, I shall be in despair and sorrows even after getting Moksha (salvation and going to the heaven) (yā binu paramapadahum̐ dukha dahihaum̐)³.

[³To wit, oh Lord, I do not want salvation, and I have no desire to go to heaven either. Keep me in hell if you so wish, but keep me as a favourite toy or a puppet of your hands. Whether that toy is a bird or a stone—a dud, stupid bird, or a gross, lifeless stone—I will be happy. For remember, this way I stand a good chance at being embraced by you, held by your hands, touched involuntarily by your feet, be very close to you, of being an object of your affection, grace and mercy, and feel the privilege of being remembered and coveted by you just like children covet their playthings and become emotionally and sentimentally attached to their toys. Oh Lord, surely this boon is no match for salvation and heaven. Let the hermits and sages seek salvation; I don't want it! What I want is closeness to you; what I wish is that you feel so attached to me at the emotional level that you would just not let a day pass without thinking of me and remembering me just like a child becomes so attached with his favourite toys that he would sleep with them by his side, eat and drink with the toys by his side, and does not wish to part with his favourite toys even for a minute.] (3).

This servant (i.e. an ardent devotee, loyal follower, faithful subordinate) of yours has only one wish (*ītanī jiya lālasā dāsakē*)—and that is to constantly and consistently keep holding your foot-wear with my hands (i.e., always have abiding devotion for your holy feet, serve you like a servant serves his master, and be so favoured by you that you allow me to hold your feet so closely as a foot-wear that is in direct contact with its owners foot) (*kahata pānahī gahihauṁ*)⁴.

Either give me your word of honour (that you will fulfil my wish). Or at least take a firm decision in your heart that you will uphold and keep my vows (in case you do not wish to openly commit yourself by giving your word). For me it would be the same thing (*dījai bacana ki hṛdaya āniyē 'tulasikō pana nirbahihauṁ*).

[⁴This stanza also highlights Tulsidas' extreme humility and devotion for the Lord. A similar idea is expressed earlier also in verse no. 209, stanza no.1.] (4).

[Note: Refer verse no. 210 in the context of this verse. There also, Tulsidas has expressed a similar desire of his heart. The following verse no. 232 continues with the same sentiment as expressed in this verse.]

Who is more merciful, munificent and gracious than Lord Śrī Rāma?

(232)

दीनबंधु दूसरो कहँ पावों?
को तुम बिनु पर-पीर पाइ है? केहि दीनता सुनावों ।।1।।
प्रभु अकृपालु, कृपालु अलायक, जहँ-जहँ चितहिं डोलावों ।
इहै समुझि सुनि रहौं मौन ही, कहि भ्रम कहा गवावों ।।2।।
गोपद बुड़िबे जोग करम करौं, बातनि जलधि थहावों ।
अति लालची, काम-किंकर मन, मुख रावरो कहावों ।।3।।
तुलसी प्रभु जियकी जानत सब, अपनो कछुक जनावों ।
सो कीजै, जेहि भाँति छाँड़ि छल द्वार परो गुन गावों ।।4।।

(232)

dīnabandhu dūsarō kaham' pāvōm?
kō tuma binu para-pīra pā'i hai? kēhi dīnatā sunāvōm. 1.
prabhu akrpālu, krpālu alāyaka, jaham'-jaham' citahim ḍōlāvōm.
ihai samujhi suni rahauṁ mauna hī, kahi bhrama kahā gavāvōm. 2.
gōpada buḍibē jōga karama karaum, bātani jaladhi thahāvōm.
ati lālaci, kāma-kiṅkara mana, mukha rāvarō kahāvōm. 3.
tulasī prabhu jiyakī jānata saba, apanō kachuka janāvōm.
sō kijai, jēhi bhāmṭi chāmḍi chala dvāra parō guna gāvōm. 4.

Verse no. 232—Where else (except Lord Ram) will I find a greater (or better) friend of the distressed, the wretched, the lowly and the humble? (*dīnabandhu dūsarō kaham' pāvōm?*).

Who (except Lord Ram) feels pity and sorrowful when he sees the pitiful and sorrowful condition of others? (kō tuma binu para-pīra pā'i hai?).

Say, then, where else should I go to narrate my tales of woes and miseries? (kēhi dīnatā sunāvōm) (1).

Wherever I send my mind to search (jaham̃-jaham̃ citahim̃ dōlāvōm) for someone who would show mercy and pity for me (and all those miserable people who are like me), everywhere I find a lord who either does not have enough mercy and compassion in his heart (prabhu akrpālu), and even if he does have these qualities in him then he is not able or competent enough to extend the benefit of these excellent qualities to those who come to him seeking relief from their miseries (krpālu alāyaka)¹.

[¹To wit, all lords that I find are either not willing to provide selfless help, solace and succour to the needy because they are stern in their hearts, or they aren't potent or competent enough to be of any good to me or be of any help to me due to some or the other reason.]

Considering and realising all this (the state of affairs), I keep quiet because it is in vain to tell anything to such lords (ihai samujhi suni rahaur̃ mauna hī). Say, what is the use of pleading with any of them—because it is a waste of effort and undermining my self-respect. Verily indeed, it is futile to expect any relief and help from any of these lords (kahi bhrama kahā gavāvōm)².

[²To wit, instead of getting any relief whatsoever from them, I will only expose my shortcomings, faults, sins, miseries, delusions and humbleness before them and the world at large. This would result in inviting further humiliation, scorn and ridicule at their hands, and it would only go to aggravate my misery and torments. So I decided to keep quiet.] (2).

My deeds are so corrupt, evil, detestable and shameful that I should drown myself in the dirty water that fills a shallow groove made in the mud by a cow's hoof (gōpada buḍibē jōga karama karaur̃). But unfortunately, I boast so much as if I'll measure the depth of the ocean (bātani jaladhi thahāvōm)³.

[³To wit, I am so ashamed of myself due to my deeds that I should drown in a small body of water that can be accommodated in a shallow hollow made from a cow's hoof in the ground. But instead of that, I boast that I am so exalted and great that I can do the greatest of noble things and achieve the greatest of fame in this world.

I am so small, humble and a non-entity that I get sunk in a small body of water as shallow and inconsequential as the groove made on the earth by the hoof of a cow, but I am so haughty and arrogant that I talk boastfully with a big and loud mouth, claiming that I can measure the vast ocean. Is so laughable, so ridiculous and stupid of me!]

My mind is very greedy, full of avarice and a slave of 'Kaam' (full of lust, covetousness, passion, desires, infatuations) (ati lālaci, kāma-kiṅkara mana), but I pretend blatantly that I am your (Lord Ram's) servant (and I have no compunctions about it and no shame claiming so) (mukha rāvarō kahāvōm)! (3).

Oh Lord! Though you know whatever is in the mind and heart of Tulsidas (whether such thoughts and desires are good or bad) (tulasī prabhu jiyakī jānata saba), still I want to tell you something (apanō kachuka janāvōm).

So now, please find out a way by which I could abandon all pretensions, falsehoods, cunning and trickery and other such vices (i.e. I should stop wasting my breath boasting about myself and my false goodness), and instead sing your glorious fame and your excellent virtues with a pure heart, all the while lying in front of your doorway (sō kijai, jēhi bhām̐ti chām̐ḍi chala dvāra parō guna gāvōm̐)⁴.

[⁴I don't want to go anywhere else. I have no other talents by which I can serve you or be of any good to you, except a few words that I can compose as poetry in your honour. This is the only thing I know—and I want to serve you sincerely with this only talent that I possess! Oh Lord, prevail upon my mind that it stops me from boasting about my false abilities and goodness, and instead be motivated to sing praises for you and narrate your divine story for my own good and for the good of the world at large.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

One must not try worldly dirty tricks with Śrī Rāma

(233)

मनोरथ मनको एकै भँति ।
चाहत मुनि-मन-अगम सुकृत-फल, मनसा अघ न अघाति ॥1॥
करमभूमि कलि जनम, कुसंगति, मति बिमोह-मद-माति ।
करत कुजोग कोटि, क्यों पैयत परमारथ-पद सांति ॥2॥
सेइ साधु-गुरु, सुनि पुरान-श्रुति बूझ्यो राग बाजी तौंति ।
तुलसी प्रभु सुभाउ सुरतरु-सो, ज्यों दरपन मुख-कांति ॥3॥

(233)

manōratha manakō ēkai bhām̐ti.
cāhata muni-mana-agama sukr̥ta-phala, manasā agha na aghāti. 1.
karamabhūmi kali janama, kusaṅgati, mati bimōha-mada-māti.
karata kujōga kōṭi, kyōm̐ paiyata paramāratha-pada sānti. 2.
sē'i sādhu-guru, suni purāna-śruti būjhaīō rāga bājī tām̐ti.
tulasī prabhu subhā'u surataru-sō, jyōm̐ darapana mukha-kānti. 3.

Verse no. 233—The desires and inclinations of the 'Mana' (the mind, its sub-conscious aspect, and the heart collectively) are really fascinating, wonderous and unique (manōratha manakō ēkai bhām̐ti)—on the one hand it wants to have such rare fruits of righteousness, noble virtues, excellent deeds, supreme bliss etc. which are beyond reach even for the minds and hearts of hermits, sages, ascetics and other exalted souls (cāhata muni-mana-agama sukr̥ta-phala), and on the other hand it (the Mana) is never satisfied (or fed-up) with doing evil, vileful and abominable deeds, committing sins, and following a path that is unrighteous, unscrupulous and sinful (manasā agha na aghāti).

[Say, how is it possible to get the best of fruits by sowing seeds of poison?]
(1).

Though the land on which I am born in this life is called a 'Karma-Bhumi' (i.e. a land where one can undertake actions and do deeds that would ensure not only a bright future for him but can also neutralise whatever negativity that remains sticking to him from his previous births), yet I feel absolutely confounded and shackled due to the circumstances in which I find myself. It is because my birth here is in the era of Kali (which is a highly corrupt, pervert and a morally degrading period), I have the company of wicked people and I am surrounded by those who are rascals, imposters and evil ones (instead of saints and enlightened ones), and my mind is haughty and arrogant, it is full of pride, ignorance, delusions and vanity. (*karamabhūmi kali janama, kusaṅgati, mati bimōha-mada-māti*).

Just imagine, in this scenario how is it possible for me to attain the most exalted state of one-ness with the Lord; how can I expect to have supreme bliss and tranquility for myself when I do millions of things which are most abhorable, evil, vile, ignoble and shameful (*karata kujōga kōṭi, kyōm paiyata paramāratha-pada sānti*)¹.

[¹To wit, with all the above mentioned negativities acting as dregs on my soul, becoming virtual shackles around my neck, acting as dirt and filth sticking on me and neutralising whatever good deeds I manage to do, what good can I expect for me in the prevailing circumstances in which I find myself. They are dragging me down and burdening my soul with guilt that is beyond my control.] (2).

[In this precarious situation, there is still some hope for all living beings. What is it?] By serving the Guru (a true, enlightened, wise and selfless moral preceptor and teacher) and saints (pure-hearted, pious and holy men) (*sē'i sādhu-guru*), as well as by hearing attentively the Vedas and Purans (and understanding their teaching and practicing in one's life what they preach) (*sunī purāna-śruti*), attainment of supreme bliss and peace is possible. Indeed, it becomes as easy to achieve this goal as it is easy to determine what type of musical instrument is being played by merely hearing the sound it produces (*būjhaīō rāga bājī tāmṭi*). [For instance, it is extremely easy to distinguish between the sound produced by a drum and a stringed instrument even though a person may not be an expert in music.]

Oh Tulsidas, but beware! Though it is true that Lord Sri Ram's temperament and nature are surely like a Kalpa Tree (which is the heavenly tree that fulfils all wishes; i.e. one gets anything and everything that he asks Lord Ram for), but at the same time the Lord's nature and temperament are like a mirror in which one sees one's own face. (*tulasī prabhu subhā'u surataru-sō, jyōm darapana mukha-kānti*)².

[²The mirror will reflect the face of a person as it actually is. Similarly, the Lord gives you fruits according to your inner-self or inner-thoughts. You cannot deceive a mirror—likewise, you can't cheat Sri Ram. Imposturing, pretension, deceit, conceit, falsehood, trickery, cunning etc. have no jurisdiction in Sri Ram's realm. Lord Ram is like a barometer or a thermometer, or any other 'meter' for that matter that cannot be manipulated or tampered with to suit one's interests. Lord Ram would definitely grant what a person wishes—but it all depends upon the seeker's true intention and integrity. If a person is deceitful, the Lord punishes him; if he is honest

then the Lord rewards him. In brief, one should not play dirty tricks with Sri Ram!] (3).

Life spent in vain

(234)

जनम गयो बादिहिं बर बीति ।
 परमारथ पाले न पस्यो कछु, अनुदिन अधिक अनीति ।।1।।
 खेलत खात लरिकपन गो चलि, जौबन जुवतिन लियो जीति ।
 रोग-बियोग-सोग-श्रम-संकुल बड़ि बय बृथहि अतीति ।।2।।
 राग-रोष-इरिषा-बिमोह-बस रुची न साधु-समीति ।
 कहे न सुने गुनगन रघुबरके, भइ न रामपद-प्रीति ।।3।।
 हृदय दहत पछिताय-अनल अब, सुनत दुसह भवभीति ।
 तुलसी प्रभु तें होइ सो कीजिय समुझि बिरदकी रीति ।।4।।

(234)

janama gayō bādihiṁ bara bīti.
 paramāratha pālē na paraīō kachu, anudina adhika anīti. 1.
 khēlata khāta larikapana gō cali, jaubana juvatina liyō jīti.
 rōga-biyōga-sōga-śrama-saṅkula baḍi baya bṛthahi atīti. 2.
 rāga-rōṣa-iriṣā-bimōha-basa rucī na sādhu-samīti.
 kahē na sunē gunagana raghubarakē, bha'i na rāmapada-prīti. 3.
 hṛdaya dahata pachitāya-anala aba, sunata dusaha bhavabhīti.
 tulasī prabhu tēm hō'i sō kījiya samujhi biradakī rīti. 4.

Verse no. 234—[In this verse, Tulsidas regrets that his life has been wasted in pursuit of worldly desires, in the appeasement of his senses, and longing for things that had no bearing on his long-term spiritual welfare. He has cited his own example as a representation of the life of all human beings. An earlier verse no. 83 has also expressed a similar idea.]

The beautiful (rare, marvellous, unique, fortunate and opportunus) life (of mine) as a human being has gone by in vain; it has been frittered away and wasted in the pursuit of futility! (janama gayō bādihiṁ bara bīti).

Not even a tiny bit of success was achieved in the field of spiritulism, no efforts were made for attainment of liberation and deliveration of the soul from the endless cycle of birth and death, and no desire was felt and no prospects were researched for obtaining emancipation and salvation for one's self—in other words, no effort was ever made from the perspective of 'Parmarth' which could ensure a good future and welfare for the soul. (paramāratha pālē na paraīō kachu).

On the other hand, all sorts of negative qualities and demeaning characters found their foothold and made an ascendancy. Unrighteousness, inauspiciousness, evil, vice, sin, perversity, and various kinds of dishonourable acts and thoughts not

only became firmly established but continued to increase progressively by the passage of time. (anudina adhika anīti) (1).

[Summing up one's life, Tulsidas says—] 'Childhood' went away unawares as it was spent in playing and eating and drinking (khēlata khāta larikapana gō cali); 'Adulthood' was won-over by women as it was spent trying to please and impress them by all means (jaubana juvatina liyō jīti); and 'Old age' was wasted in vain due to sufferings and agonies inflicted by so many untold diseases, agonies of separation (from one's near and dear as they either left me and went their ways, or died), numerous kinds of sorrows, miseries and grief that engulfed me from all sides, and futile efforts to finish-off the different responsibilities that had remained unfulfilled till then (rōga-biyōga-sōga-śrama-saṅkula baḍi baya br̥thahi atīti) (2).

Because I was under the influence of negative qualities and vices such as 'rāga-rōṣa-iriṣā-bimōha'¹ etc. that had become entranced inside me and had the better of me so much so that they had always created a mental barrier which stopped, pushed back and neutralised whatever desire that arose in my heart to meet saints, have their company, and benefit from their communion (rāga-rōṣa-iriṣā-bimōha-basa rucī na sādhu-samīti).

The result was that in the absence of this company, neither did I ever have the opportunity to listen and sing about glories, the famed virtues and the divine stories related to Lord Sri Ram (kahē na sunē gunagana raghubarakē), nor did I develop any trace of devotion, affection and faith in the holy feet of the divine Lord (bha'i na rāmāpada-prīti) (3).

¹rāga- attachment/infatuation;
rōṣa- anger/wrath/indignation/vengeance;
iriṣā- jealousy/envy/malice/animosity/ill-will;
bimōha- delusion/ignorance of reality/hallucination.}

Upon hearing about the huge and intolerable torments created by the hellish fire of suffering arising out of the countless fears associated with life that are natural and unavoidable in this mundane, mortal and gross world, this heart (of mine) is now burning with regret and is full of remorse (hr̥daya dahata pachitāya-anala aba, sunata dusaha bhavabhīti).

Now, under the present circumstances, do whatever you (Sri Ram) can do for this unfortunate and humble Tulsidas, keeping in view your peerless and famed reputation (of being a benevolent redeemer and the most merciful Lord of all, a Lord who takes special care of those who have no chance of ever getting freedom from the horrors of life and death, but who have come to surrender before you, looking up to you for your grace and mercy) (tulasī prabhu tēm hō'i sō kījiya samujhi biradakī rīti) (4).

Lord Rāma is like the Cintāmaṇī Gem

ऐसेहि जनम—समूह सिराने ।
 प्राननाथ रघुनाथ—से प्रभु तजि सेवत चरन बिराने ॥1॥
 जे जड़ जीव कुटिल, कायर, खल, केवल कलिमल—साने ।
 सूखत बदन प्रसंसत तिन्ह कहँ, हरितें अधिक करि माने ॥2॥
 सुख हित कोटि उपाय निरंतर करत न पायँ पिराने ।
 सदा मलीन पंथके जल ज्यों, कबहुँ न हृदय थिराने ॥3॥
 यह दीनता दूर करिबेको अमित जतन उर आने ।
 तुलसी चित—चिंता न मिटै बिनु चिंतामनि पहिचाने ॥4॥

(235)

aisēhi janama-samūha sirānē.

prānanātha raghunātha-sē prabhu taji sēvata carana birānē. 1.

jē jaṛa jīva kuṭila, kāyara, khala, kēvala kalimala-sānē.

sūkhata badana prasansata tinha kaham̐, haritēm adhika kari mānē. 2.

sukha hita kōṭi upāya nirantara karata na pāyam̐ pirānē.

sadā malīna panthakē jala jyōm, kabahum̐ na hṛdaya thirānē. 3.

yaha dīnatā dūra karibēkō amita jatana ura ānē.

tulasī cita-cintā na miṭai binu cintāmani pahicānē. 4.

Verse no. 235—Alas! In this regretful way (as narrated in verse nos. 83 and 234 of this book), numerous lives (births) have been wasted by me in vain (aisēhi janama-samūha sirānē).

Unfortunately during all these lives, I had abandoned such a magnanimous and benevolent Lord as Lord Raghunātha (Sri Ram), who is so exceedingly lovable and dearest to one's heart (prānanātha), and instead I had frittered away my time in endlessly serving at the feet of others (who were all driven by selfishness and had never bothered and cared for my true well-being) (prānanātha raghunātha-sē prabhu taji sēvata carana birānē) (1).

It is such a sorry and pitiable state of affairs for me that I had made my throat hoarse and my mouth dry by praising and extolling (sūkhata badana prasansata tinha kaham̐) all through my life all those stupid, dull and ignorant Jivas (“jē jaṛa jīva”; creatures) who are soaked only in the evils, faults and negativities associated with Kaliyug (kēvala kalimala-sānē) without having anything good to their credit and meritorious in their name, who are wicked and deceitful to the hilt, who are coward and treacherous to the extreme, who are rascals, cunning and unscrupulous without limit to their perversion and evilness (kuṭila, kāyara, khala). (jē jaṛa jīva kuṭila, kāyara, khala, kēvala kalimala-sānē).

It is such an irony and a proof of my own stupidity and foolhardiness that I had used up all the energy of my body and became emaciated in the process of vociferously praising and unduly lauding such despicable creatures as if they were more exalted, greater and better than the Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Ram; the Lord God) himself (sūkhata badana prasansata tinha kaham̐, haritēm adhika kari mānē)!¹

[¹To wit, instead of loathing such sinful and evil persons and avoiding any contact with them, I had not only liberally praised them but even raised them to an

exalted lever higher than the Lord God. Woe to me: how ignorant am I, and how deplorable is my state of mind!] (2).

Alas, it is so sad that my legs never felt tired and ached (*na pāyam̐ pirānē*) while endlessly pursuing countless paths and trying various methods in order to derive happiness and comfort from the gross sense objects of this mundane world (*sukha hita kōṭi upāya nirantara karata*).

The condition of my heart had always been so unclean and abhorable like the filthy puddle of murky water found on a dusty road (*sadā malīna panthakē jala jyōm̐*); it had never found stability, purity and cleanliness (*kabahum̐ na hr̥daya thirānē*)².

[²In stanza no. 2 the deplorable condition of the mind is described, and of the heart in this stanza no. 3. These two components, viz. the mind and the heart, form the subtle body of the creature who is controlled from within his own self by these two entities. The creature's external gross body is driven by the instructions issued by his internal subtle body. This is why Tulsidas finds fault with the mind and the heart instead of the gross body.] (3).

I thought over this problem and contemplated upon numerous ways and means to remove this wretched, miserable and stupid state of affairs that I find myself in (*yaha dīnatā dūra karibēkō amita jatana ura ānē*), but oh Tulsidas, the worries and consternations that have agitated you and upset your mind and heart cannot be eliminated (*tulasī cita-cintā na miṭai*) without recognising that there is a wonderful gem known as 'Chintamani' ("*binu cintāmani pahicānē*"—because this is a single 'charm' that can act as a miracle-panacea for all your worries and fears that have so much confounded you)³.

[³The word 'Chintamani' means a gem that removes all worries and grief. Refer also to verse nos. 105, 116, 129 and 296 of this book Vinai Patrika.

Tulsidas advises that once we realise that Lord Ram and his holy name is the one-stop solution for all our spiritual and worldly problems, then there would be no scope for fear and confusions any more. The problem lasts only till the time a creature does not recognise this fact.

In the context of what has been said in stanza nos. 1-3, this last stanza implies that all the problems that a creature faces in his life have their genesis in the creature's stupidity inasmuch as he had spent his life in serving and pleasing so many lords and masters, including of course the many gods and other deities that he worshipped and made offerings to, instead of having love and devotion for Lord Ram, for had he done so the Lord would have taken upon himself to look after the creature's well-being and happiness as well as his liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration.

Verily, if a traveller has to pass through a place full of wicked people as characterised in this verse, and he is so sore affright of them that he thinks it best to keep them in good humour by offering his obeisance to them so that they don't bother him unnecessarily in the passage through this thug-country, then Lord Ram is his true friend and guide who will accompany him and take him safely across without letting these cruel inhabitants of the place harming him.

When a traveller passes through a dense forest said to be infested with ghosts and wild spirits, he keeps on muttering some holy charm so that his passage is made safe. Likewise, a wise person would invoke Lord Ram while journeying through the wild forest-like world infested with wicked and treacherous people.

A lonely man feels scared and utterly frightened in a dark forest inhabited by wild beasts. But with a torch in hand and an expert hunter to protect and guide him, his confidence gets a boost, and he traverses the jungle path fearlessly and confidently. Here, the torch is symbolic of Lord Sri Ram's holy name, and the expert hunter stands for the protective shield that the Lord offers himself.] (4).

[Note—Refer to verse nos. 105, 116, 129, 206 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.]

Advice to the Creature

(236)

जो पै जिय जानकी—नाथ न जाने ।
 तौ सब करम—धरम श्रमदायक ऐसेइ कहत सयाने ।।1।।
 जे सुर सिद्ध, मुनीस, जोगबिद बेद—पुरान बखाने ।
 पूजा लेत, देत पलटे सुख हानि—लाभ अनुमाने ।।2।।
 काको नाम धोखेहू सुमिरत पातकपुंज पराने ।
 बिप्र—बधिक, गज—गीध कोटि खल कौनके पेट समाने ।।3।।
 मेरु—से दोष दूरि करि जनके, रेनु—से गुन उर आने ।
 तुलसिदास तेहि सकल आस तजि भजहि न अजहुँ अयाने ।।4।।

(236)

jō pai jiya jānakī-nātha na jānē.
 tau saba karama-dharama śramadāyaka aisē'i kahata sayānē. 1.
 jē sura sid'dha, munīsa, jōgabida bēda-purāna bakhānē.
 pūjā lēta, dēta palatē sukha hāni-lābha anumānē. 2.
 kākō nāma dhōkhēhū sumirata pātakapunja parānē.
 bipra-badhika, gaja-gīdha kōṭi khala kaunakē pēṭa samānē. 3.
 mēru-sē dōṣa dūri kari janakē, rēnu-sē guna ura ānē.
 tulasidāsa tēhi sakala āsa taji bhajahi na ajahum' ayānē. 4.

Verse no. 236—Oh Creature (the living being)! If you do not understand (or fail to comprehend and realise) the true and essential nature and form of Lord Sri Ram (jō pai jiya jānakī-nātha na jānē)¹, then all your efforts towards doing righteous deeds and taking noble actions, all your efforts to inculcate noble and auspicious virtues and characters in order to accumulate merit and have goodness to your credit, expecting to attain spiritual gain and rewards for your endeavours, will go in vain as they would remain mere efforts, labours and physical exercises. In all sooth and without gainsay, you will not gain anything worthwhile from any of your efforts. (tau saba karama-dharama śramadāyaka).

This is the considered view and a wise advice given by experts and those who are well-versed in this field (aisē'i kahata sayānē) [This is because realising Sri Ram is the ultimate goal of all methods and spiritual efforts made by you, the creature, and if this goal is not attained then the entire exercise that you may so strenuously undertake for your spiritual welfare would go to waste.]

[¹The true and essential form of Lord Ram is that he is a personified form of the Supreme Being and the Supreme Lord of this creation. His cosmic form is pure Consciousness. He the Lord who is all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, uniform, attributeless, sublime and subtle. He is the cause, effect and end of all creation. He is the light or the very source of all knowledge and of all that there is to be known. He is fathomless, measureless and peerless. He is most benevolent, compassionate, munificent, benignant and magnanimous. He is forgiving, equanimous and fortitudonous. He is stable, unwavering, immanent and constant. He has a gross form as well as the most subtlest and most intangible that one can imagine of.

In short, Lord Ram is beyond comprehension and beyond reach just as the sky is, but at the same time he is very easy to realise and have access to just by having the virtues of devotion, faith, belief, conviction and love for him. See also verse no. 276.

Therefore, one must not think that when Tulsidas and the different scriptures talk about having devotion for Lord Ram and offering worship to him, they are talking of some great king by the name of 'Ram' who happened to rule over some ancient kingdom of the name of Ayodhya. One must not be misled by the physical form of Lord Ram as merely being some great prince or king of some kingdom on earth. This misconception about the Lord would deter the spiritual aspirant from worshipping him and having devotion for him—for no one would like to waste time on such spiritual activities directed towards a human being. Only bards and minstrels of a royal court who were employed by kings used to do it because they were paid for it. Surely and certainly, the ancient scriptures do not talk about a human king when they refer to Lord Ram as being worthy of worship and devotion! So a spiritual aspirant must understand this inviolable and incontrovertible fact first and foremost as this knowledge would make him confident and assured of the spiritual path chosen by him. Otherwise, doubts and confusions would reign supreme, and this situation would be counter-productive and even ruinous for him.] (1).

The Vedas and the Purans (i.e. all the ancient scriptures) say (*bēda-purāna bakhānē*) that all the different Gods, the Siddhas (mystics; those who have special super-natural powers), the Munis (hermits, sages), and the Jogis (ascetics who are experts in Yoga) (*jē sura sid'dha, munīsa, jōgabida*)—all of them take some kind of offering in return to granting of boons for the happiness of the seeker (which is usually for attainment of some form of material gains in the world) (*pūjā lēta, dēta palatē sukha*).

Even this largesse is granted by them to the seeker after taking into account their own interests, their own benefits and losses (*hāni-lābha anumānē*)².

[²In short, all the gods, mystics, sages and ascetics are selfish and self-serving. No one bothers about the spiritual welfare of the tormented creature; no one would selflessly advice the creature that he should not ask for anything pertaining to the transient joy, comfort and happiness related to life in this world, but should pay attention to the future of his soul by doing sacrifices, atoning for his past sins, and making sincere effort to break free from the cycle of transmigration so that all his torments, miseries and pains are terminated for good. If the seeker of boon does not first please these gods or mystics with offerings, they would turn him away.

Refer also to verse no. 216 in this context.] (2).

Other than you oh Lord (Sri Ram), whose name has such an immensity of mystical power and ability that even remembering it by mistake (or unintentionally,

unwillingly and inadvertently) one can destroy from their roots hordes of negativities such as different sorts of sins, vices, evils and unrighteousness that have become firmly entrenched inside him (kākō nāma dhōkhēhū sumirata pātakapunja parānē).

[Now, Tulsidas gives a few examples of such people who were fallen and sinful, but who achieved liberation and deliverance merely on the basis and strength of their uttering the holy name of the Lord, even by default.] The Brahmin named Ajamil, the hunter-and-bandit named Valmiki, the elephant named Gajraj, the vulture named Jatau, and countless others who were wicked and evil ones—where else did they finally find their rest and peace if it was not by merging their souls with you?³

This being the case, which other God or Lord would be so selflessly gracious and large-hearted as Lord Ram is? (bipra-badhika, gaja-gīdha kōṭi khala kaunakē pēṭa samānē).

[³Literally, by ‘entering your stomach or abdomen’ = kaunakē pēṭa samānē. What is to be remembered here is that the ‘stomach or the abdomen’ is only a symbolic way of saying that their individual souls finally merged or coalesced with the Supreme Cosmic Soul of Creation to become one with it just like the case of water in a cup that becomes one with the ocean when it is poured into the latter.

From metaphysical perspective, the ultimate deliverance of the soul is when the microcosmic soul of an individual creature merges with the macrocosmic Soul of this creation just like the example of the water in the cup becoming one with the vast body of the water in the ocean when poured into it.] (3).

[Lauding Lord Ram for his merciful, forgiving, magnanimous, benevolent, gracious, obliging and welcoming nature, Tulsidas says—] You (Lord Sri Ram) forget and overlook all the sins and vices of your servants (devotees, followers) which are as huge as Mt. Sumeru (mēru-sē dōṣa dūri kari janakē), while remembering and giving importance in your heart even their tiniest and most inconsequential forms of goodness of character, good virtues or noble deeds (rēnu-sē guna ura ānē).

Oh Tulsidas! Oh you fool! Abandoning all other hopes, why don't you worship, adore, venerate and have devotion for that Lord (Sri Ram) who is so exceptionally and exceedingly merciful and benevolent? (tulasidāsa tēhi sakala āsa taji bhajahi na ajahum'ayānē) (4).

[Note—Refer also to earlier verse nos. 73-74; 82-84, 132, 135-136 of this book Vinai Patrika in relation to the ‘advice to the creature’.

Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Advice to the Tongue

(237)

काहे न रसना, रामहि गावहि?
निसिदिन पर—अपवाद वृथा कत रटि—रटि राग बढ़ावहि ।। १ ।।
नरमुख सुंदर मंदिर पावन बसि जनि ताहि लजावहि ।

ससि समीप रहि त्यागि सुधा कत रविकर—जल कहँ धावहि ।।2।।
 काम—कथा कलि—कैरव—चंदिनि, सुनत श्रवन दै भावहि ।
 तिनहिं हटकि कहिहरि—कल—कीरति, करन कलंक नसावहि ।।3।।
 जातरूप मति, जुगुति रुचिर मनि रचि—रचि हार बनावहि ।
 सरन—सुखद रबिकुल—सरोज—रबि राम—नृपहि—पहिरावहि ।।4।।
 बाद—बिबाद, स्वाद तजि भजि हरि, सरस चरित चित लावहि ।
 तुलसिदास भव तरहि, तिहँ पुर तू पुनीत जस पावहि ।।5।।

(237)

kāhē na rasanā, rāmahi gāvahi?

nisidina para-apavāda vṛthā kata raṭi-raṭi rāga baṛhāvahi. 1.
 naramukha sundara mandira pāvana basi jani tāhi lajāvahi.
 sasi samīpa rahi tyāgi sudhā kata ravikara-jala kham̐ dhāvahi. 2.
 kāma-kathā kali-kairava-candini, sunata śravana dai bhāvahi.
 tinahim̐ haṭaki kahihari-kala-kīrati, karana kalaṅka nasāvahi. 3.
 jātārūpa mati, juguti rucira mani raci-raci hāra banāvahi.
 sarana-sukhada rabikula-sarōja-rabi rāma-nṛpahi-pahirāvahi. 4.
 bāda-bibāda, svāda taji bhaji hari, sarasa carita cita lāvahi.
 tulasidāsa bhava tarahi, tihūm̐ pura tū punīta jasa pāvahi. 5.

Verse no. 237—[In the context of this verse, refer also to verse no. 129 and 247 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where Tulsidas has advised the Tongue wisely in a similar manner.]

Oh my Tongue (rasanā)! Why don't you sing (i.e. talk and discuss) about the countless glories, the excellent fame, the virtuous qualities, and the divine stories of Lord Sri Ram (kāhē na rasanā, rāmahi gāvahi)?

Why do you wear yourself down and increase your delusions and get confounded, why do you enhance your attachment and entanglement with this world by worthlessly criticising and speaking ill of others, gossiping, tatling, chattering ceaselessly, and indulging in heresy and hearsay, day and night (i.e. always)? (nisidina para-apavāda vṛthā kata raṭi-raṭi rāga baṛhāvahi) (1).

Why do you stay to defile and put to shame the beautiful and sanctified symbolic shrine represented by the mouth of a human body (naramukha sundara mandira pāvana basi jani tāhi lajāvahi)?

[To wit, oh Tongue, why do you not take Sri Ram's holy name to keep and maintain the holiness and sanctity of the temple-like mouth of the human body, instead of polluting it with worthless chatter?]

Why do you run behind the illusionary water of the mirage (symbolised by the allurements, attachments and enticements of the object of this deluding world) to quench your thirst even though you have a direct access to an eternal source of Amrit, the elixir of life (by the way of being able to utter the holy and divine name of Lord Ram and sing his glories)? (sasi samīpa rahi tyāgi sudhā kata ravikara-jala kham̐ dhāvahi).

[To wit, why doesn't the tongue chant the holy name of Lord Ram instead of constantly chattering about useless things related to this delusory world?] (2).

The talk about the pleasures, comforts and charms of the different sense objects of this materialistic mundane world (*kāma-kathā*) are like the rays of the moon that help the water-lilies, symbolised by all the countless temptations associated with the present corrupt era of Kaliyug, to bloom (*kali-kairava-candini*)¹.

[¹The water lily blooms in the light of the moon during the night. Tulsidas cites this example to stress that talking about worldly matters and charms of the countless objects of the senses would naturally ignite attraction and infatuation for them. All these relate to the world which is compared to Kaliyug because both are dark and fearsome for the creature. The moon rises only during the night, and ‘night’ is a metaphor for all things that are dark, fearsome, deluding and ridden with spiritual ignorance. No one can see properly in the darkness of the night; even the moonlight does not help much, and often it casts such ominous and eerie long shadows that a person begins to imagine that he is seeing a shadow of ghosts and phantoms. Hence, the moonlight more often than not inspires fear and horror.]

Oh Tongue! You are so naïve that you spend your precious time and energy in attentively hearing about them, and getting enthralled and captivated by them (*sunata śravaṇa dai bhāvahi*).

Oh Tongue! Stop talking about the pleasures and objects of this world, and instead sing the magnificent glories and fames of Lord Sri Hari (Sri Ram) so that the ignominy and blemishes cast upon the ears by hearing nonsense things are removed and eliminated for your own good (*tinahim haṭaki kahihari-kala-kīratī, karaṇa kalaṅka naśāvahi*)².

[²The ears have become tainted and polluted by constantly hearing about this world and its nuisance, and it can be rectified and purified only by hearing the pure and glorious fame of Sri Ram, and it is the tongue which can do it. This is because one hears about anything only when someone speaks or talks about it, and ‘speaking and talking’ are the function of the ‘tongue’. So the main culprit in spreading heresy and hearsay, in entangling the creature in the web of delusions and ignorance, in creating lust and passion and attachment in him, is the ‘tongue’.] (3).

Make a symbolic garland of gold representing wisdom, intellect and discrimination, use beautiful beads made up of various methods (to worship, adore, revere and have devotion for the Lord) to complete this garland (*jātarūpa matī, jugutī rucira maṇi racī-racī hāra baṇāvahi*), and then offer it to Lord Sri Ram who is a provider of comfort, solace and succour to those who have sought refuge in his holy feet, and who is like a ‘sun’ that enables the lotus of the Sun-race to bloom (*sarāṇa-sukhada rabikula-sarōja-rabī rāma-nṛpahi-pahīrāvahi*)³.

[³The tongue is advised to chant and sing the holy and divine name of Lord Ram, about his excellent virtues, glories and fame. For this purpose, the tongue should take the help of the mind with its resources of purified wisdom and refined intellect. Talking about the holiness and divinity of the Lord in an honest and affectionate way, with faith and devotion, is the symbolic form of worship that the ‘tongue’ can do. Since ‘gold’ is the most precious of things that one gifts to someone whom he loves dearly, such talk of the Lord is a symbolic offering of a golden garland to him. The ‘beads’ of this garland would be the different episodes related to Lord Ram from the scriptures, as well as the many excellent virtues and divine qualities of the Lord that one narrates.] (4).

Oh Tongue! Abandon talking about all things that cause discord, debate, confusion, bewilderment and dilemma, and without paying attention to their ‘taste’ (i.e., whether any of these things are pleasant or not, attractive or not) (*bāda-bibāda, svāda taji*), you should focus your attention to having devotion for Lord Ram, adoring and venerating the Lord, having faith in him, developing true affection for him, worshipping him, and involving yourself in singing the Lord’s glories, virtues and fame (*bhaji hari, sarasa carita cita lāvahi*).

If you do it, then (with your help) Tulsidas shall cross this ocean-like world for sure (i.e., he shall certainly be free from the cycle of birth and death; he shall overcome the horrors incumbent with transmigration) (*tulasidāsa bhava tarahi*). And at the same time, you shall also become eligible for great honour and renown in all the three Lokas (worlds) (*tihūṁ pura tū punīta jasa pāvahi*) (5).

The Jiva (living being) is like a ‘Kabandh’

(238)

आपनो हित रावरेसों जो पै सूझै ।
तौ जनु तनुपर अछत सीस सुधि क्यों कबंध ज्यों जूझै ।।1।।
निज अवगुन, गुन राम! रावरे लखि—सुनि मति—मन रूझै ।
रहनि—कहनि—समुझनि तुलसीकी को कृपालु बिनु बूझै ।।2।।

(238)

āpanō hita rāvarēsōm jō pai sūjhai.
tau janu tanupara achata sīsa sudhi kyōm kabandha jyōm jūjhai. 1.
nija avaguna, guna rāma! rāvarē lakhi-suni mati-mana rūjhai.
rahani-kahani-samujhani tulasīkī kō kṛpālu binu būjhai. 2.

Verse no. 238—Oh Lord (Sri Ram)! If this Jiva (the living being) could foresee that his welfare, happiness and well-being (i.e., if he was wise enough to have this foresight) lies with you alone (*āpanō hita rāvarēsōm jō pai sūjhai*), then why would he continue to make so much and so many strenuous efforts seeking his good elsewhere, tottering and stumbling aimlessly around like a headless trunk called a ‘Kabandha’ (*tau janu tanupara achata sīsa sudhi kyōm kabandha jyōm jūjhai*)¹?

[¹To wit, the Jiva does not seem to have faith and reliance in the Lord God, that is why in spite of having a ‘head’—literally meaning a master or patron or Lord over his head to act as his angel-guardian—he stills roams around like a destitute and a vagabond, quarreling, fighting, creating discord and enmity with all and sundry in search of happiness, comfort, fame, pleasures etc. that elude him in the world. This is such a ridiculous situation! He is like a blind man or a headless trunk that collides with all and sundry in order to reach a particular object which might be just in front of his eyes. What an absurd and ironic state of affairs it is! Without the realisation of the Lord God, he will be neither here nor there. In this stanza, the ‘headless trunk of a Kabandha’ is used as a metaphor for a person who has no intelligence and wisdom; he

has a gross body but lacks wisdom and knowledge to guide this body in the correct direction like a Kabandha. The word ‘Kabandha’ traces its origin to ancient times when battles were fought with swords and two fighters usually engaged themselves in a one-to-one duel. In such cases, if a warrior’s head was severed by a sword of the opponent in the heat of battle, the headless trunk continued to totter and fight for some more time before collapsing to the ground though the warrior had died the instant the head was severed and tossed off the trunk.

Hence, a Jiva is like a senseless creature known as a Kabandha if he is not able to judge what is good for him—if he is not able to understand that his true spiritual and temporal welfare and good lies in serving Lord Ram, having devotion for the Lord and surrendering before him rather than making so much futile effort for the same by pursuing the world and facing opposition from one and all, a situation that never gives him peace and happiness of any sort but only causes immense troubles, tribulations, vexation, misery and pain for him.

In mythology, the “Kabandha” is a hobgoblin that resembles a cross between an ameba and an octopus. It has a rounded belly with holes to act as eyes, ears and mouth. There is no brain. It either has small protuberances to stand for its limbs, or nothing at all. The life of a Kabandha is a huge curse on the creature.] (1).

Oh Lord Ram (rāma rāvarē)! Considering my own shortcomings, faults, perversions, evils, sins and vices (nija avaguna), and when I see and hear about your (Lord Ram’s) rarest of rare goodnesses, noble virtues, excellence of character, your greatness, glories, reputation and fame (guna rāma rāvarē lakhi-suni), my wisdom and mind become hesitant and reluctant to approach you (because I feel that you will not accept me due to my burden of faults and my evil nature) (mati-mana rūjhai)².

[²To wit, I feel extremely hesitant to approach you; I falter in my steps and am unable to decide how to go before you, who are a treasury of all goodness and the noblest of all virtues, because I am so unworthy of you. Oh Lord, I am so unfit to be called your servant, follower or devotee because of my background of sinfulness and evilness, of my corrupt deeds and fickle-and-wayward mind, that though I sincerely wish to surrender myself before you and truly and faithfully serve you for the rest of my life, I can’t gather enough courage to come and stand before you, to face you, as I feel so guilty that my legs buckle under me, and I somehow become too shy to approach you with my prayers to accept me.]

Oh merciful, kind and munificent Lord (krpālu)! Who other than you will understand (kō krpālu binu bījhai) my predicament and miserable condition, the actual state of vexation and confoundedness that I find my life in, the dilemma which I face, my latent nature and habit as well as about my deeds, my lofty expectations from you and my sincere desire of having mercy from you in spite of all the drawbacks and drags on my character and nature, because you can know all about them, you are aware of all that lies as a secret buried inside my heart and mind even without my expressly saying anything about them (rahani-kahani-samujhani tulasīkī)³.

[³To wit, since nothing is hidden from you, you should show mercy upon me because of the simple fact that it is in your nature to do so, and I am being absolutely truthful before you when I say that I have come to surrender to you and seek your blessings and patronage—though I don’t have enough courage to stand up before you and say so much in clear words.] (2).

A Person who is Embraced and Accepted by the Lord is deemed to be
Most Fortunate and Blessed

(239)

जाको हरि दृढ करि अंग कस्यो ।
 सोइ सुसील, पुनीत, बेदबिद, बिद्या—गुननि भस्यो ॥1॥
 उतपति पांडु—सुतनकी करनी सुनि सतपंथ डस्यो ।
 ते त्रैलोक्य—पूज्य, पावन जस सुनि—सुनि लोक तस्यो ॥2॥
 जो निज धरम बेद—बोधित सो करत न कछु बिसस्यो ।
 बिनु अवगुन कृकलास कूप मज्जित कर गहि उधस्यो ॥3॥
 ब्रह्म—बिसिख ब्रह्मांड—दहन—छम गर्भ न नृपति जस्यो ।
 अजर—अमर, कुलिसहुँ नाहिंन बध, सो पुनि फेन मस्यो ॥4॥
 बिप्र अजामिल अरु सुरपति तें कहा जो नहिं बिगस्यो ।
 उनको कियो सहाय बहुत, उरको संताप हस्यो ॥5॥
 गनिका अरु कंदरपतें जगमहुँ अघ न करत उबस्यो ।
 तिनको चरित पवित्र जानि हरि निज हृदि—भवन धस्यो ॥6॥
 केहि आचरन भलो मानैं प्रभु सो तौ न जानि पस्यो ।
 तुलसिदास रघुनाथ—कृपाको जोवत पंथ खस्यो ॥7॥

(239)

jākō hari dṛṛha kari aṅga karañō.
 sō'i susīla, punīta, bēdabida, bidyā-gunani bharañō. 1.
 utapati pāṇḍu-sutanakī karanī suni satapantha ḍarañō.
 tē trailōkya-pūjya, pāvana jasa suni-suni lōka tarañō. 2.
 jō nija dharama bēda-bōdhita sō karata na kachu bisarañō.
 binu avaguna kṛkalāsa kūpa majjita kara gahi udharañō. 3.
 brahma-bisikha brahmāṇḍa-dahana-chama garbha na nṛpati jarañō.
 ajara-amara, kulisahum' nāhinna badha, sō puni phēna marañō. 4.
 bipra ajāmila aru surapati tēm kahā jō nahim bigarañō.
 unakō kiyo sahāya bahuta, urakō santāpa harañō. 5.
 ganikā aru kandarapatēm jagamaham' agha na karata ubarañō.
 tinakō carita pavitra jāni hari nija hṛdi-bhavana dharañō. 6.
 kēhi ācarana bhalō mānaim prabhu sō tau na jāni parañō.
 tulasidāsa raghunātha-kṛpākō jōvata pantha kharañō. 7.

Verse no. 239—Only a person who has been firmly embraced (i.e. welcomed and accepted as a devotee) by Sri Hari (i.e. by Lord God represented by Lord Ram—“jākō hari dṛṛha kari aṅga karañō”) is considered by all others in this world as being polite and courteous (sō'i susīla), being clean, holy, pious and exalted (punīta), as being an expert in the knowledge of the essence of the Vedas (primary scriptures) and all other Vidyas (i.e. branches of science, all kinds of spiritual and temporal knowledge, having expertise and specialisation in them, and possessing intelligence and wisdom), and is a treasury of all noble qualities and righteous virtues (bēdabida, bidyā-gunani bharañō)¹.

[¹To wit, when the Lord shows grace and kindness upon anyone, all the good virtues too show an eagerness to exhibit themselves in such a person, automatically and voluntarily, because being associated with a person who has been blessed by the Lord enhances the intrinsic value of these virtues besides giving them more moral authority, validity and sanctity. It establishes their credentials and spreads their fame more than anything else would.

It is just like the case when a person is shown honour by a king. Earlier, the same person would not be recognised by anyone or may have even been neglected by them, but once he is shown respect by the king he becomes everyone's friend, a much sought-after person, and all want to be acquainted with him, greet him with a smile, and praise him lavishly though earlier they had shunned to talk with him.] (1).

The way the sons of Pandu, called the 'Pandavas', were born, and their deeds were of such a nature (i.e. were evil, unethical and unrighteous) that made the 'Sata-Panth' (the path of truth, righteousness, probity, propriety and uprightness) squirm in guilt and become scarred (*utapati pāṇḍu-sutanakī karanī suni satapantha ḍaraīō*).

But even they became respected and were honoured by all in the three Lokas (worlds) due to the grace, kindness and mercy shown upon them by Lord Krishna so much so that the ordinary people were able to cross this ocean-like world of transmigration when they hear the story of these sons of Pandu (which is deemed to be glorious, virtuous and noble instead of being ignoble, despicable and immoral as narrated in the Bhagwat Maha Puran and the Mahabharata)² (*tē trailōkya-pūjya, pāvana jasa suni-suni lōka taraīō*).

[²Refer verse no. 106, stanza no. 4 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika', along with its accompanying note, where an exactly the same idea is expressed and the reason given. See also verse nos. 97 and 99 where more is said about the Pandavas.] (2).

The king named Nrig³ had scrupulously and diligently followed all the edicts as prescribed by the Vedas (to attain purity and deliverance) for people of his stature and birth, and he had left no stone unturned in following the path of righteousness and nobility (*jō nija dharama bēda-bōdhita sō karata na kachu bisaraīō*).

But unluckily and ironically he became a lizzard in a dark well, without any fault of his (*binu avaguna kṛkalāsa kūpa*). He was taken out by the Lord (here referring to Lord Krishna) and given liberation (i.e., he was set free from the body of lizzard and given salvation) (*majjita kara gahi udharaīō*).

[³Refer verse nos. 213, stanza no. 4, and verse no. 218, stanza no. 3 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where more details are narrated about Nrig and his ill-luck, and how he was given deliverance by Lord Krishna. See also verse no. 240, stanza no. 2 herein below.] (3).

[Not only these but many other fantastic and incredible events had happened in ancient times that show how those who were favoured by the Lord had overcome all odds to come out trumps in their lives and were praised by one and all, though they weren't worthy of any honour in their own right. Some of these instances are cited now—]

King (Parikshit, the grand son of Arjun) could not be burnt to death in the womb even by the invincible and very potential weapon called 'Brahmastra'—which is capable of burning the whole universe—shot at him (by Aswathama, the son of Dronacharya)⁴ (*brahma-bisikha brahmāṇḍa-dahana-chama garbha na nrpati*

jaraîō), while the demon (called Namuchi)⁵, who was blessed with immortality and a body that would be free from all diseases, and who could not be killed even by the Bajra (the weapon of Indra), died from foam of the ocean (ajara-amara, kulisahum̃ nāhinna badha, sō puni phēna maraîō).

[⁴Refer verse no. 226, stanza no. 4 and verse no. 220, stanza no. 5 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika', along with their accompanying notes, where this story is cited. Briefly, the story is as follows: Ashwathama, the son of Dronacharya, decided to avenge the killing of his father by trickery (see sr. no. 70) and hit a 'Brahamashtra' at the womb of Parikshit's mother to kill the foetal child in order to eliminate the Pandava clan. Sri Krishna intervened and neutralised that weapon midway, thereby saving Parikshit's life.

⁵The demon Namuchi had done severe penances and extracted a boon from Brahma, the creator, that he would not be killed by any weapon, nor by any dry or wet object. During the great God-Demon war, he unleashed such horror among the Gods that they panicked and wailed in utter distress. There was a voice from the heavens predicted that the only way to kill the demon was by using the foam of the ocean, which was employed by the Gods to finally kill Namuchi.] (4).

What was there in the character of the Brahmin named Ajamil and the King of Gods (i.e. Indra)⁶ that would not ruin their fate and doom them (bipra ajāmila aru surapati tēm kahā jō nahim̃ bigaraîō), but you had helped them a lot by removing the sorrows and torments that were overwhelming them and afflicting their hearts (unakō kiyō sahāya bahuta, urakō santāpa haraîō)⁷.

[⁶The story of Ajamil is narrated in a note appended to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika', while how evil was Indra can be judged from the story of Ahilya narrated in verse no. 43, stanza no. 3.

⁷To wit, none of these two had any good and worthy in their character that would entitle them for any sort of praise and honour. Ajamil was a sinful and fallen man, and Indra was passionate and jealous beyond measure. But, by the grace of the Lord, both found redemption: Ajamil went to heaven, and Indra was honoured as the 'King of Gods'.] (5).

Which sin, vice, unrighteousness and unscrupulous act in this world was there that was not done by the whore called Ganika (whose other name was Pingla) and Kamdeo (the god of passion, lust and love)⁸ (ganikā aru kandarapatēm jagamahm̃ agha na karata ubaraîō), but Lord Hari (is so gracious and merciful that he overlooked all their faults and shortcomings, and instead) took cognizance of what little goodness and nobility they had in their character to give them a place in his heart (tinakō carita pavitra jāni hari nija hr̃di-bhavana dharaîō).

[⁸The story of Pingla is narrated in the note of verse no. 94, stanza no. 3 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.

Kamdeo was so mischievous that he had the temerity to audaciously disturb the meditation of Lord Shiva, trying to lure the Lord with his antics and temptations that arouse natural passions in all living beings. But he failed miserably when the Lord burnt him to ashes in anger. But the Lord (Shiva, representing the Supreme Being known as "Hari" here) was so merciful that even after initially punishing Kamdeo for his impertinence, he blessed the latter with immortality, albeit in a non-physical form, because henceforth Kamdeo would reside in the 'heart' of all, including the Lord himself in the subtle form of natural love and passion that is an inherent characteristic of all living beings. This story is narrated in Tulsidas' epic

Book titled 'Ram Charit Manas' in its Baal Kand (or Canto 1), from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 82—to Doha no. 87.] (6).

Therefore, no one can know with certainty by which act, by which behaviour or by which character the Lord would be pleased and show his grace (upon those who come in contact with the Lord and hence become eligible to get the Lord's blessings, even if they don't expect it due to their sinful manners and evil history) (*kēhi ācarana bhalō mānaim prabhu sō tau na jāni paraīō*).

With this knowledge and a firm belief in his heart, Tulsidas stands expectantly in front of his Lord Ram, hoping that the Lord would show his grace, mercy, kindness, compassion, benevolence, munificence, benediction and magnanimity upon him (inspite of Tulsidas' shortcomings and faults) (*tulasidāsa raghunātha-krpākō jōvata pantha kharaīō*)⁹.

[⁹To wit, Tulsidas is fully aware of his own shortcomings and faults that would normally make him unworthy of receiving the Lord's grace, but when he remembers all the instances cited herein above in this verse, he becomes hopeful of receiving the Lord's grace—because if the Lord could show his grace upon all the fallen and sinful creatures cited in this verse, surely there are good chances that he would also accept Tulsidas, for definitely he is not worse than any of them.] (7).

[Note—The idea expressed in this verse is further reiterated in the next verse no. 240 herein below.]

Lord Rāma is attainable only by having pure love and affection
for him in one's heart

(240)

सोइ सुकृती, सुचि साँचो जाहि राम! तुम रीझे ।
गनिका, गीध, बधिक हरिपुर गये, लै कासी प्रयाग कब सीझे ।।1।।
कबहुँ न डग्यो निगम-मगतें पग, नृप जग जानि जिते दुख पाये ।
गजधौं कौन दिछित, जाके सुमिरत लै सुनाभ वाहन तजि धये ।।2।।
सुर-मनि-बिप्र बिहाय बड़े कुल, गोकुल जनम गोपगृह लीन्हो ।
बायों दियो बिभव कुरुपतिको, भोजन जाइ बिदुर-घर कीन्हो ।।3।।
मानत भलहि भलो भगतनितें, कछुक रीति पारथहि जनाई ।
तुलसी सहज सनेह राम बस, और सबै जलकी चिकनाई ।।4।।

(240)

sō'i sukrṭī, suci sām̐cō jāhi rāma! tuma rījhē.
ganikā, gīdha, badhika haripura gayē, lai kāsī prayāga kaba sījhē. 1.
kabahum̐ na ḍagyō nigama-magatēm paga, nṛga jaga jāni jītē dukha pāyē.
gajadhaur̐ kauna dichita, jākē sumirata lai sunābha vāhana taji dhayē. 2.
sura-mani-bipra bihāya baṛē kula, gōkula janama gōpagṛha līnhō.
bāyōm̐ diyō bibhava kurupatikō, bhōjana jā'i bidura-ghara kīnhō. 3.
mānata bhalahi bhalō bhagatanitēm, kachuka rīti pāṛathahi janā'ī.

tulasī sahaja sanēha rāma basa, aura sabai jalakī cikanāī. 4.

Verse no. 240—[This verse follows up and builds upon the idea that is expressed in verse no. 239 herein above. Refer also to verse no. 106 earlier among many such others where the central theme is that the Lord had willingly liberated and provided deliverance to the most lowly and the downtrodden of creatures who had nothing meritorious to their credit.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram! Only a person upon whom you have graciously become pleased and munificent (i.e., who has been blessed by your benediction, kindness and mercy), is deemed to be truly holy, pious, pure, fortunate and auspicious by all (sō'i sukr̥tī, suci sām̐cō jāhi rāma! tuma rījhē).

The prostitute (Pingla), the vulture (Jatau) and the hunter-cum-bandit (Valmiki)¹ who had gone to reside in the abode of the Lord known as 'Haripur' in the heaven (ganikā, gīdha, badhika haripura gayē)—when did they go to Prayag (one of the most revered pilgrim place where there is a confluence of the three holy rivers, Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati) and perform penances and austerities there (Tapa), or had burnt themselves to death doing severe sacrifices in the fire ignited by using cakes of cow-dung (known as doing "Hat-Yoga") (lai kāsī prayāga kaba sījhē)?

[¹Pingla—refer verse no. 239, stanza no. 6 herein above.

Jatau and Valmiki—refer verse no. 57, stanza no. 3.] (1).

King Nrig² had never deviated from the righteous path prescribed by the Vedas, but the world knows how much torments and agonies he had to suffer (for he had become a lizzard in a well for thousands of years due to a curse) (kabahum̐ na ḍagyō nigama-magatēm̐ paga, nṛga jaga jāni jītē dukha pāyē).

Where was the elephant named Gajraj³ initiated in the folds of Dharma (religion), the mere single distressed call of whose made you dismount from your vehicle (the celestial Eagle known as Garud) and rush forward holding only your discus in order to help him and save him from certain death (when he was being dragged into the water by the crocodile)? (gajadhaur̐ kauna dichita, jākē sumirata lai sunābha vāhana taji dhayē)

[²King Nrig—refer verse no. 239, stanza no. 3.

Gajraj—refer verse no. 57, stanza no. 3.] (2).

Instead of preferring to reveal yourself as some form of a God, or taking birth in the household of some exalted and noble person of high stature in society or belonging to a higher caste, such as a great sage or a Brahmin (sura-mani-bipra bihāya barē kula), you had taken birth in the household of an ordinary cowherd family whose head was known by the name of Nanda in a place called Gokul (in Vrindavan) (gōkula janama gōpagṛha līnhō)³.

Rejecting the pomp and pageantry of the royal court of the King of the Kaurav clan (who was known by the name of Duryodhan) (bāyōṛ̐m̐ diyō bibhava kurupatikō), you had opted to go to the ordinary household of an impoverished, humble and inconsequential person known as Bidur to take your meals (consisting of staple food such as ordinary vegetables and curry) (bhōjana jā'i bidura-ghara kīnhō)⁴.

[³Refer also to verse no. 98, stanza nos. 1-2 where it is described how Lord Krishna acted like an ordinary child in the household of Nanda.

⁴Refer also to verse no. 106, stanza no. 4. Lord Krishna had preferred to eat in the humble household of Bidur instead of enjoying a multi-course feast as the royal guest of King Duryodhan of the Kaurava clan.] (3).

The Lord is greatly pleased and enchanted by devotion and affection shown by his ardent and loyal devotees; the Lord feels happy in their company; pleasing his devotees is liked by the Lord (*mānata bhalahi bhalō bhagatanitēm*).

The Lord (here referring to Krishna) had described a little bit of the rules and traditions of this love and devotion to Arjun (*kachuka rīti pāṛathahi janā'ī*).

Oh Tulsidas! Verily and in all sooth, Lord Sri Ram is influenced by and is under the sway of simple virtues such as love, devotion and affection for him (albeit that these should be true and natural) (*tulasī sahaja sanēha rāma basa*). All the other methods, paths, means and ways that are available to a creature (whereby he can derive happiness and peace) are like the smoothness and comfort given by water (*aura sabai jalakī cikanā'ī*)⁵.

[⁵When water falls or flows over the skin during a hot day, one feels relieved for some time, but the misery returns as soon as the water evaporates. Similarly, all other methods available to the creature give him only transient and superficial peace, happiness and comfort. Only when he surrenders before Lord Ram and develops true love and devotion for the Lord that he can expect to have abiding peace and bliss for his tormented soul.] (4).

[Note—It ought to be noted here that like many other verses, Tulsidas has asserted that there is no difference between the two forms of the Lord, as Lord Ram and Lord Krishna, by citing instances from the life and time of Krishna and using them to glorify his own Lord Ram. This proves that he sees no distinction between the two.]

Oh Lord, why don't you show your grace upon me?

(241)

तब तुम मोहूसे सठनिको हठि गति न देते ।
 कैसेहु नाम लेइ कोउ पामर, सुनि सादर आगे है लेते ।।1।।
 पाप—खानि जिय जानि अजामिल जमगन तमकि तये ताको भे ते ।
 लियो छुड़ाइ, चले कर मीजत, पीसत दाँत गये रिस—रेते ।।2।।
 गोतम—तिय, गज, गीध, बटप, कपि, हैं नाथहिं नीके मालुम जेते ।
 तिन्ह के काज साधु—समाजु तजि कृपासिंधु तब तब उठिगे ते ।।3।।
 अजहुँ अधिक आदर येहि द्वारे, पतित पुनीत होत नहिं केते ।
 मेरे पासंगहु न पूजिहैं, है गये, हैं, होने खल जेते ।।4।।
 हौ अबलौं करतूति तिहारिय चितवन हुतो न रावरे चेते ।
 अब तुलसी पूतरो बाँधिहै, सहि न जात मोपै परिहास एते ।।5।।

(241)

taba tuma mōhūsē saṭhanikō haṭhi gati na dētē.
 kaisēhu nāma lē'i kō'u pāmara, suni sādara āgē hvai lētē. 1.
 pāpa-khāni jiya jāni ajāmila jamagana tamaki tayē tākō bhē tē.
 liyō chuṛā'i, calē kara mīnjata, pīsata dāmṭa gayē risa-rētē. 2.
 gōtama-tiya, gaja, gīdha, biṭapa, kapi, hairṁ nāthahirṁ nīkē māluma jētē.
 tinha ke kāja sādhu-samāju taji krpāsindhu taba taba uṭhigē tē. 3.
 ajahum' adhika ādara yēhi dvārē, patita punīta hōta nahirṁ kētē.
 mērē pāsaṅgahu na pūjihairṁ, hvai gayē, hairṁ, hōnē khala jētē. 4.
 hau abalaum karatūti tihāriya citavana hutō na rāvarē cētē.
 aba tulasī pūtarō bāmḍhihai, sahi na jāta mōpai parihāsa ētē. 5.

Verse no. 241—[Oh Lord! You have an unmatched and unprecedented reputation of as a Lord who shows grace and mercy upon the those who are the most wicked and sinful, and you never feel shy to do so. Is it not true that once a creature is embraced and accepted by you, he gets sure liberation and deliverance from the cycle of miseries and pain associated with birth and death in this mortal world? Tell me then, when you were gracious and kind enough to bestow the supreme status of salvation to numerous wicked and wretched fellows, then—]

Why don't you show a similar inclination and the same willingness to grant the supreme and the most exalted state of salvation and emancipation to a wicked, mean and wretched person like me (taba tuma mōhūsē saṭhanikō haṭhi gati na dētē)?

When any sinner and an evil creature merely utters your name in any manner whatsoever, you immediately step forward to receive him and embrace him with due respect¹, then why don't you do it for me; I am baffled²? Do I not fit the bill? (kaisēhu nāma lē'i kō'u pāmara, suni sādara āgē hvai lētē).

[¹Refer to verse no. 239, stanza no. 1 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where a similar idea is expressed.

²To wit, why don't you keep in mind your own reputation as the Lord who invariably welcomes and accepts all those who come to seek refuge and shelter with you, granting them all freedom from their spiritual as well as worldly problems, and assuring them of liberation and deliverance without hassles? Why don't you remember your own proclamation in this regard—that if one has Bhakti or devotion for you, then no matter what and no matter how sinful that person is, you would be glad to accept him? Well, this is exactly what you have told Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana, when he had come to seek refuge with you—refer: 'Ram Charit Manas', Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 48.

On another occasion you have affirmed to sage Narad that you take care of your devotees just like a mother takes care of her infant child— refer: 'Ram Charit Manas', Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 43.] (1).

[Having reminded Lord Ram of his grand reputation of being the most benevolent and merciful Lord of all, Tulsidas now goes on to elaborate upon this and cite some outstanding instances where the Lord had provided liberation and deliverance to sinful creatures. Refer to verse no. 106 also in general terms where similar instances are cited on the same subject.]

The messengers of Yam (the God of death) started aggressively tormenting Ajamil because they found him to be a mine or a treasury of sins, evil and vices (pāpa-khāni jiya jāni ajāmila jamagana tamaki tayē tākō bhē tē), but you had saved him from their clutches (because he had called out your name ‘Narain’ at the time of death, albeit in the belief that he was calling out to his son of the same name) (liyō churā’i). The messengers of Yam returned empty-handed, wringing their hands and grinding their teeth (in frustration and anger at their failure to take Ajamil with them) (calē kara mīn̄jata, pīsata dām̄ta gayē risa-rētē)³.

[³Refer verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ where the story of Ajamil is narrated in brief as a note appended to it.] (2).

The Lord knew well how the wife of sage Gautam (Ahilya), Gajraj (the Elephant), the vulture (Jatau), the tree (Yamalarjun) and monkeys (Sugriv) etc. were (i.e., Lord Ram was very well aware of their evil character and sins) (gōtama-tiya, gaja, gīdha, biṭapa, kapi, hair̄m nāthahir̄m nīkē māluma jētē), but when the need arose you had preferred to neglect the company of saints and went forward to help them (tinha ke kāja sādhu-samāju taji krpāsindhu taba taba uṭhigē tē)⁴.

[⁴The Lord had never hesitated and felt shy to go out of his way to help these creatures inspite of them being tainted by sin. The Lord knew that saints and sages do not need much of his help for their liberation and deliverance as their own meritorious life and good deeds would stand them in good stead and entitle them for attaining salvation and emancipation. But these poor fellows had no chance whatever. If the Lord did not intercede on their behalf, their souls would suffer interminably forever.

The story of Gautam’s wife Ahilya is narrated in verse no. 43, stanza no. 3; of Gajraj and Jatau in verse no. 57, stanza no. 3; of the ‘tree’ in verse no. 78, stanza no. 5; and of the monkey Sugriv in verse no. 134, stanza no. 5.] (3).

Even today, such people get more respect at your door, and no one knows how many sinners, how many of those who are evil, unrighteous and unscrupulous, are made pure and respected, revered and honoured, daily at your place (ajahum̄ adhika ādara yēhi dvārē, patita punīta hōta nahim̄ kētē).

This being the case, why have I not been heard by you till now; that’s really baffling for me? Am I a lesser sinner, or a less pervert, evil and vile person than any one of them? All the wicked rascals that are present in the world, and those that shall be in future—all of them are miniscule compared to me (because my sins and faults are immense) (mērē pāsaṅgahu na pūjihair̄m, hvai gayē, hair̄m, hōnē khala jētē)⁵.

[⁵To wit, oh merciful Lord, if you can show such magnanimity for great sinners and evil ones, then I don’t understand why you neglect me? Am I not a sinner and evil person who would qualify to get some attention from you? I have been pleading for so long, but it looks you have not paid heed to my prayers. If you say that I am not a big enough sinner who would need special care at your hands, then let me assure you oh Lord that if you collect all the sinners of this world then I would still beat them on counts of sin and evil tendencies. So that is not an excuse you have!] (4).

(Politely and lovingly admonishing his Lord Sri Ram, Tulsidas says—) Uptill now I had my attention fixed on you and was waiting politely for my turn to come for redemption (as I was relying on your natural habit of liberating those who were wretched, sinners, wicked and evil, albeit one by one). But it seems that you have paid no attention to me at all (*hau abalaum karatūti tihāriya citavana hutō na rāvarē cētē*).

Well then, enough is enough for now. But I would like this to be known to everyone that now I shall hold an effigy of your glorious ‘name’ (to symbolically declare to the world that the person, i.e. me, Tulsidas, who has associated himself with this this divine name is being neglected, and so let others beware) (*aba tulasī pūtarō bām̐dhihai*)⁶.

[Do you know why I shall do this?] It is because it is no longer possible for me to bear with such embarrassment, negligence, indifference, scorn, derision, insult, rebuke and humiliation at your hands! (*sahi na jāta mōpai parihāsa ētē*)⁷.

[⁶I shall hold your effigy on a bamboo pole and show it to all. When asked, I'll tell them it is the name of my Lord Sri Ram—who is dumb, deaf and dud like this effigy! Embarrassed and cornered, perhaps you'll then listen to me out of shame or even to get rid of me. But nevertheless, my ruse will work as I will finally manage to get your attention when you will be forced to listen to my pleas before dismissing me from your front. So oh Lord, I have decided to get to you and have your attention by hook if not by crook, as it were!]

⁷This is a remarkable verse that shows how confident Tulsidas was of the Lord's merciful nature—because he knew that the Lord would never punish him for this audacious and insinuating statement. One would like to congratulate Tulsidas for his love and closeness to his Lord Ram and his confidence in himself so much so that he wasn't afraid of admonishing and literally forcing his beloved Lord to agree to his terms.

Surely, one can talk tough only when one has confidence in himself of success, is not cowed down by fear of revenge or retribution, and is sure that the other party too loves him so much that no matter what he says against the latter, he would not take umbrage of it. Surely also, Sri Ram is not so stone-hearted that he would turn away Tulsidas empty-handed. Certainly, when the Lord saw Tulsidas throw tantrums like an annoyed child who has earlier failed to draw his parent's attention because the latter was busy elsewhere, the Lord would smile at him and calm him down, talk with him most lovingly and politely, and fulfil all his desires.

This apparent quarrel is part of a devotee's way of showing his closeness and love for the Lord. See verse no. 256 also in this respect.] (5).

Tulasīdās' humility and humbleness,
& Lord Śrī Rāma's greatness and exalted stature

तुमसम दीनबंधु, न दीन कोउ मोसम, सुनहु नृपति रघुराई ।
 मोसम कुटिल-मौलिमनि नहिं जग, तुमसम हरि! न हरन कुटिलाई ॥1॥
 हौं मन-बचन-करम पातक-रत, तुम कृपालु पतितन-गतिदाई ।
 हौं अनाथ, प्रभु! तुम अनाथ-हित, चित यहि सुरति कबहुं नहिं जाई ॥2॥
 हौं आरत, आरति-नासक तुम, कीरति निगम-पुराननि गाई ।
 हौं सभीत तुम हरन सकल भय, कारन कवन कृपा बिसराई ॥3॥
 तुम सुखधाम राम श्रम-भंजन, हौं अति दुखित त्रिबिध श्रम पाई ।
 यह जिय जानि दास तुलसी कहँ राखहु सरन समुझि प्रभुताई ॥4॥

(242)

tumasama dīnabandhu, na dīna kō'u mōsama, sunahu nrpati raghurā'ī.
 mōsama kuṭila-maulimani nahiṁ jaga, tumasama hari! na harana kuṭilā'ī. 1.
 hauṁ mana-bacana-karama pātaka-rata, tuma kṛpālu patitana-gatidā'ī.
 hauṁ anātha, prabhu! tuma anātha-hita, cita yahi surati kabahum' nahiṁ jā'ī.
 2.
 hauṁ ārata, ārati-nāsaka tuma, kīrati nigama-purānani gā'ī.
 hauṁ sabhīta tuma harana sakala bhaya, kārana kavana kṛpā bisarā'ī. 3.
 tuma sukhadhāma rāma śrama-bhanjāna, hauṁ ati dukhita tribidha śrama
 pā'ī.
 yaha jiya jāni dāsa tulasī kaham' rākhahu sarana samujhi prabhutā'ī. 4.

Verse no. 242—Listen Oh King of Kings, Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram; “sunahu nrpati raghurā'ī”)! On the one hand there is no one else except you who is a better friend and a better well-wisher of those who are meek, weak, humble and distressed (tumasama dīnabandhu), and on the other hand there is no one more meek, weak, humble and distressed than me (na dīna kō'u mōsama)¹.

Indeed in all sooth there is no one who is superior to me in being wicked and evil in mind and heart in this world (mōsama kuṭila-maulimani nahiṁ jaga), and similarly oh Lord, there is no one in this world who is comparable to you as being a great destroyer or eliminator of such evil traits as wickedness, sinfulness, deceit, perversity, and all other negativities of all kinds (tumasama hari! na harana kuṭilā'ī)².

[¹In the context of this verse, refer also to verse nos. 95-96, 114, 117-118 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.

²To wit, oh Lord, I perfectly fit the bill and am fully eligible to get your attention in this matter, for I am highly wicked, very evil and overwhelmed with sins in this world, and you are the one who is renowned to provide freedom from all such negativities. So now you must accept me for this very reason that you have to purify me and purge all the negativities and remove all impurities that have so far overwhelmed me—for otherwise your immaculate reputation would take a beating and get tarnished.] (1).

I am engrossed and indulgent in sins, vices and evil deeds by using my mind, with my speech and words, and in my deeds and actions (hauṁ mana-bacana-karama pātaka-rata), and oh merciful and gracious Lord (kṛpālu), you are the one who

provides the supreme state of purification (i.e. emancipation and salvation to the soul of) sinners, those who are evil and vile (**tuma patitana-gatidā'ī**).

I am a desolate, lonely and a destitute person (**hauṁ anātha**), and oh Lord, you are the benefactor of such people (**prabhu tuma anātha-hita**).

I just cannot get rid of (i.e. drive away, forget, remove, erase) this fact from my heart and mind (**cita yahi surati kabahum' nahim jā'ī**). [And this is why I keep on insisting you to help me and accept me as one of your humble servant, follower and devotee—for I know that you love such distressed souls and have extreme compassion and love for them in your magnanimous heart. So how can you not accept me or neglect me by any measure?] (2).

I am miserable, distressed, sorrowful and unhappy (**hauṁ ārata**), while you are the one who removes them (**ārati-nāsaka tuma**).

The Vedas and Purans sing (decare loudly, proclaim) this glory and fame of yours (**kīrati nigama-purānani gā'ī**). [To wit, I am not saying anything cooked up by me because I am suffering, but this fact about your magnanimous nature and benevolent temperament is proclaimed by the ancient scriptures too.]

I am scared of this world (**"hauṁ sabhita"**; consisting of the cycle of birth and death, and its accompanying horrors), and you are the destroyer of all fears (**tuma harana sakala bhaya**).

[So therefore, inspite of so many ways in which we are both related to each other—] What is the reason that you don't show your mercy, benevolence, kindness and grace upon me (**kāraṇa kavana kṛpā bisarā'ī**)? [To wit, oh Lord, you must be kind to me, for this is in your nature to be kind to those who are sorrowful and distressed, if they come to you begging for mercy and forgiveness which I am doing.] (3).

Oh Lord Sri Ram! You are an abode of bliss (**tuma sukhadhāma rāma**) and are the eliminator of weariness (i.e. agitations, frustrations, miseries etc.) that torment a creature in his life in this world (**śrama-bhañjana**), while I am extremely sorrowful and miserable (**"hauṁ ati dukhita"**; i.e. am agitated, frustrated and weary), tired of the constant misery caused to me by the three agitations or turbulences of the world (**tribidha śrama pā'ī**)³.

[³The 3 agitations of the world which create misery and weariness are Daihik = related to physical body such as disease, old age etc.; Daivic = related to Gods, demi-gods, malignant stars creating so many unforeseen and beyond control hurdles and problems; Bhautik = related to terrestrial world e.g. rivers, mountains, fires, floods, famine, droughts etc.; also due to family, kins, relations, enemies as well as reptiles such as serpents, animals etc.]

Considering all these facts and aspects in your heart, and realising your own fame, glory and honour, you should surely keep Tulsidas (**yaha jiya jāni dāsa tulasī kaham'**) in your shelter and give him refuge in your holy feet (**rākhahu sarana samujhi prabhutā'ī**)⁴.

[⁴Oh Lord! It is my innate desire to surrender before you and accept you as my only Lord and Redeemer, and it is proclaimed by the scriptures that it is your innate desire to accept all who are downtrodden and sinful, and are without any means of liberation and deliverance, as you are the Supreme Redeemer of the soul. So these two things sync well with each other, don't they? So what's the problem in your accepting me.] (4).

[Note—Refer also to verse nos. 79, 118, 148, 158-161, 171, 206-207, 209 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ in the context of this verse.]

Tulasīdās’ prayer to Lord Śrī Rāma, seeking his grace and mercy

(243)

यहै जानि चरनन्हि चित लायो ।
 नाहिन नाथ! अकारनको हितु तुम समान पुरान—श्रुति गायो ।।1।।
 जननि—जनक, सुत—दार, बंधुजन भये बहुत जहँ तहँ हौं जायो ।
 सब स्वारथहित प्रीति, कपट चित, काहु नहिं हरिभजन सिखायो ।।2।।
 सुर—मुनि, मनुज—दनुज, अहि—किन्नर, मैं तनु धरि सिर काहि न नायो ।
 जरत फिरत त्रयताप पापबस, काहु न हरि! करि कृपा जुड़ायो ।।3।।
 जतन अनेक किये सुख—कारन, हरिपद—बिमुख सदा दुख पायो ।
 अब थाक्यो जलहीन नाव ज्यों देखत बिपति—जाल जग छायो ।।4।।
 मो कहँ नाथ! बूझिये, यह गति सुख—निधान निज पति बिसरायो ।
 अब तजि रोष करहु करुना हरि! तुलसिदास सरनागत आयो ।।5।।

(243)

yahai jāni carananhi cita lāyō.
 nāhina nātha! akāranakō hitu tuma samāna purāna-śruti gāyō. 1.
 janani-janaka, suta-dāra, bandhujana bhayē bahuta jaham̐ taham̐ haum̐ jāyō.
 saba svārathahita prīti, kapaṭa cita, kāhū nahim̐ haribhajana sikhāyō. 2.
 sura-muni, manuja-danuja, ahi-kinnara, mair̐ tanu dhari sira kāhi na nāyō.
 jarata phirata trayatāpa pāpabasa, kāhu na hari! kari kṛpā jurāyō. 3.
 jatana anēka kiyē sukha-kārana, haripada-bimukha sadā dukha pāyō.
 aba thākyō jalahīna nāva jyōm̐ dēkhata bipati-jāla jaga chāyō. 4.
 mō kaham̐ nātha! būjhiyē, yaha gati sukha-nidhāna nija pati bisarāyō.
 aba taji rōṣa karahu karunā hari! tulasidāsa saranāgata āyō. 5.

Verse no. 243—Oh Lord (Ram—“nātha”)! I have focussed my mind and its faculties exclusively in your holy feet (as a gesture of surrendering before you and having unwavering faith and devotion for you) because I have realised (yahai jāni carananhi cita lāyō) that there is no one else in this world who does good for others and cares for their welfare and well-being selflessly, without any motive or having any vested interest in doing so, and without having any sort of distinction between the beneficiaries who receive your kindness and grace (nāhina nātha! akāranakō hitu tuma samāna).

Verily indeed, in all sooth, and without the least gainsay, this is an incontrovertible fact that has been sung (declared, proclaimed repeatedly) by the Vedas and the Purans (i.e. by all the ancient scriptures) (purāna-śruti gāyō) (1).

Wherever (in whichever form or womb in which) I was born (in my previous births) I have had numerous parents, wives-sons, brothers-friends (janani-janaka, suta-dāra, bandhujana bhayē bahuta jaham̐ taham̐ haum̐ jāyō). But all of them had endeared me because they all had some kind of interest in me (i.e. they were all motivated by their self-interests) (saba svārathahita prīti). They all had deceit, crookedness, trickery, deception, pretension and fraud in their minds when they proclaimed their relationship with me (kapaṭa cita)¹.

That is why none of them taught me anything about the virtues of worship, faith, devotion and belief in the Lord's holy name, his greatness, his divinity, his glories, and all other such matters related to spiritualism and my true welfare (kāhū nahim̐ haribhajana sikhāyō)².

[¹Refer verse nos. 190-191, 199-200, 216 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' in this context.

²This is because it would not have served their purpose by showing me the correct path and leading me to the Truth. All of them taught me only those subjects that would divert my mind away from the Lord and get enchanted by and entangled in the web of this mundane world, its activities and responsibilities. Say, which parent would wish that his off-spring would become a monk to renounce the responsibilities of the world and the family?] (2).

After getting this human body, before whom have I not bowed my head, seeking my welfare and good. I did so before so many gods and hermits, so many countless humans and demons, so many mythological serpents and demi-gods known as Kinnars who have the head of a horse (here meaning four-legged animals such as bulls and cows etc.)—in order to have welfare and good fortune for my self? (suramuni, manuja-danuja, ahi-kinnara, maim̐ tanu dhari sira kāhi na nāyō)³.

[³To wit, I tried to appease them all by putting my head at their feet, whether they were as lowly as serpents and animals, or were like myself such as humans, or demons who I believed could grant me some mysterious powers like the ones they themselves possessed, or were as high as gods and hermits—seeking to please them all and get some reward in return. But all was in vain, and I got nothing.]

Oh Lord Hari (Ram)! No one gave me tranquillity, relief, peace and comfort of any worth; nowhere could I get solace and succour from the heat and scorch of the three Traitaps^a which were tormenting and horrifying me beyond measure due to the bad consequences of my sins, misdeeds, vices and spiritual taints that had been clinging to me (since my past countless lives) (jarata phirata trayatāpa pāpabasa, kāhu na hari! kari krpā jurāyō)³.

[³To wit, no one could eliminate the miseries and torments inflicted upon me by the mundane, temporal world and its sufferings; no one was able to provide me with liberation and deliverance from the sufferings and miseries caused to me by the virtue of my sins and misdeeds as well as my low spiritual state that I had brought with me in this life as a baggage from my previous life, so there was no sense of expecting any higher reward of salvation and emancipation from any of them whom I approached for help in this world.

^aThe three great tormentors of the creature are the following: Adhyatmik—suffering related to spiritual matters; Adibhautik—sufferings related to worldly matters; and Adidaivik—sufferings caused by opposed gods and stars.] (3).

Alas! I tried various methods and means to get joy, happiness and contentedness, but I always suffered in sorrows and miseries instead because I was away from the holy feet of the Lord. Indeed, I suffered because I had no devotion for the revered holy feet of Lord God Sri Ram, and instead chose to please those who were suffering themselves! I was virtually taking the wrong medicine for my malaise; I was on the wrong path. (jatana anēka kiyē sukha-kāraṇa, haripada-bimukha sadā dukha pāyō).

Now, when I see the huge and fearsome web of troubles, tribulations and miseries that have spread like a snare around me in this world (and having tried and failed in my attempts to get rid of this all-encompassing web by using different methods and means as outlined herein above), I have become so weary, dismayed, alarmed and hopeless about my welfare and safety as a boat gets when it sees that there is no water around it (aba thākyō jalahīna nāva jyōm dēkhata bipati-jāla jaga chāyō)⁴.

[⁴A boat cannot float and take anyone across if it is not put on water. If the water in a lake dries up, the boat would get stranded in the slush and the soil, unable to move a bit towards its destination. Likewise, without the help of the Lord's grace, mercy and kindness, it is impossible for a creature to cross this vast and measureless ocean of mundane existence. The creature would be stuck like the boat.] (4).

Oh gracious Lord, please understand what I say (and have pity on me) (mō kham' nātha! būjhiyē). I have come to such a sorrowful state of affairs because I had forsaken my dear Lord who is an abode of bliss, happiness and tranquillity (yaha gati sukha-nidhāna nija pati bisarāyō).

Oh Hari (Ram)! Now forsake your annoyance with me and take pity on me (aba taji rōṣa hari!) by overlooking and ignoring my faults and shortcomings. Instead, please show your mercy, kindness, benevolence, munificence and magnanimity (karahu karunā) towards this Tulsidas because he has come to surrender himself before you and take shelter in your holy feet (tulasidāsa saranāgata āyō)⁵.

[⁵Since I, Tulsidas, have told you the truth and accepted my wrong-doing, it is now upto you to live up to your great reputation of forgiving the sinners and redeeming their soul. So you must bless me and accept me forthwith. Oh Lord, I have now come to understand that when I surrender myself before you I eliminate my ego, and that means that 'I' am extinguished. When 'I' is done away with, then 'You' (the Lord) emerges in my inner-being; when my individuality is finished, I become universal like you. Well, in fact, this is what my true identity is: it is the pure Consciousness that you represent. This has been clearly implied in stanza no. 1 of the next verse no. 244.] (5).

Why I am unhappy

(244)

याहि ते मैं हरि ग्यान गँवायो ।
परिहरि हृदय—कमल रघुनाथहि, बाहर फिरत बिकल भयो धायो ।।१।।
ज्यो कुरंग निज अंग रुचिर मद अति मतिहीन मरम नहि पायो ।

खोजत गिरि, तरु, लता, भूमि, बिल परम सुगंध कहाँ तें आयो ॥2॥
 ज्यों सर बिमल बारि परिपूरन, ऊपर कछु सिवार तृन छायो ।
 जारत हियो ताहि तजि हौं सठ, चाहत यहि बिधि तृषा बुझायो ॥3॥
 व्यापत त्रिबिध ताप तनु दारुन, तापर दुसह दरिद्र सतायो ।
 अपनेहि धाम नाम—सुरतरु तजि बिषय—बबूर—बाग मन लायो ॥4॥
 तुम—सम ग्यान—निधान, मोहि सम मूढ़ न आन पुराननि गायो ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु! यह बिचारि जिय कीजै नाथ उचित मन भायो ॥5॥

(244)

yāhi tē mair̥ hari gyāna gamvāyō.
 parihari hr̥daya-kamala raghunāthahi, bāhara phirata bikala bhayō dhāyō. 1.
 jyōm̐ kuraṅga nija aṅga rucira mada ati matihina marama nahim̐ pāyō.
 khōjata giri, taru, latā, bhūmi, bila parama sugandha kahām̐ tēm̐ āyō. 2.
 jyōm̐ sara bimala bāri paripūrana, ūpara kachu sivāra tṛna chāyō.
 jārata hiyō tāhi taji haum̐ saṭha, cāhata yahi bidhi tṛṣā bujhāyō. 3.
 byāpata tribidha tāpa tanu dārūna, tāpara dusaha daridra satāyō.
 apanēhi dhāma nāma-surataru taji biṣaya-babūra-bāga mana lāyō. 4.
 tuma-sama gyāna-nidhāna, mōhi sama mūr̥ha na āna purānani gāyō.
 tulasidāsa prabhu! yaha bicāri jiya kijai nātha ucita mana bhāyō. 5.

Verse no. 244—Oh Hari (Lord Sri Ram)! The reason why I have lost wisdom and awareness about the essential nature of my soul and the supreme Truth (see note of previous verse no. 243) that would grant me eternal peace and happiness (yāhi tē mair̥ hari gyāna gamvāyō) is that I had abandoned you who resides in my lotus-like heart (in the form of pure consciousness) (parihari hr̥daya-kamala raghunāthahi)¹.

[¹Oh Lord, it is so woeful of me that I could not have devotion and faith for you the way I should have had; I could not adore and worshipping you, nor did I revere you the way I should have had. Obviously now I realise that all my spiritual predicaments and worldly torments have their origin in this factor.]

Instead, I have wandered agitatedly here and there like a vagabond and a vagrant in search of the elusive happiness and peace in the numerous sense objects and material temptations of this mundane gross world (bāhara phirata bikala bhayō dhāyō)².

[²To wit, I had tried in futility to find peace and contentedness because in my ignorance and stupidity I had sought them in the gross sense objects of this world. I thought that pursuing the world and its fascinating charms would give me joy and happiness. What a fool I was! Did I not know that the source of true happiness and bliss resides right inside me in the subtle space of my heart as the pure consciousness. This ‘consciousness’ of my heart is an image of the cosmic Consciousness represented by Lord Ram. Realising it is a sure mean and a certain instrument that gives abiding peace and bliss to the creature, but in my delusions I forgot this fact.] (1).

[Tulsidas cites an example to explain what he means.] Even as a stupid deer, who is mesmerised by the sweet fragrance of the musk, is not able to find it because it does not understand that the source of the fragrance, the musk, is hidden right inside its

own body (in its belly) (jyōm kuraṅga nija aṅga rucira mada ati matihīna marama nahim pāyō), and so it goes on frantically searching for it in the outside world, such as in the mountains, among the trees and creepers, running around madly on the surface of the earth (in the plains and the valleys), and poking in holes and caves, wondering in frustration all the while from where the sweet and pleasant scent is coming from, so is the state of affairs with me (khōjata giri, taru, latā, bhūmi, bila parama sugandha kahām tēm āyō).

[Likewise, though the embodiment of bliss, happiness and contentedness resides in my own heart as pure Consciousness that represents Lord Ram, I search for it in the outside world.] (2).

The symbolic pond is brim-full of clean water (jyōm sara bimala bāri paripūrana), but there is a thick layer of scum and green grass (algae) floating on its surface (ūpara kachu sivāra tṛṇa chāyō).

Due to this illusion created by the algae and scum (that the water of the pond is dirty), I desist from drinking the water of the pond and continue to burn my heart in thirst (though pure and clear water is available aplenty right in front of me if I would just make a small effort to move aside the algae and scum that floats on the surface of the water with my hands). Say, how can I quench my thirst if I am so ignorant and deluded? (jārata hiyō tāhi taji hauṁ saṭha, cāhata yahi bidhi tṛṣā bujhāyō)³.

[³To wit, in the heart-like pond of mine there is an inexhaustible source of clear, pure and nectar-like water of bliss and happiness in the form of pure consciousness that represents the Lord God who is a treasury and a source of eternal bliss and profound happiness. But because of the surface layer of scum representing ignorance and delusions as well as the numerous taints and blemishes that veil my wisdom and intellect, I cannot find that water, and instead run behind the illusionary water of this mirage-like world. The more I pursue this world seeking happiness the further away it shrinks and goes beyond my reach. I am so foolish that I seek happiness in things that are transient and mortal, that are gross and harbingers of grief and pain. Obviously, I cannot find true and lasting peace. Therefore, I am dying of thirst caused by the heat of the three great tormentors in this world—called the ‘Traitaps’ as narrated herein below.] (3).

On the one hand the body is already suffering due to the immensity of horrors and pain caused to it by the three Traitaps (Adhyatmik, Adhibhautik and Adhidaivik) (byāpata tribidha tāpa tanu dārūna), then there is the suffering caused by immense and unsurmountable form of poverty that hounds me, thereby aggravating my sufferings (tāpara dusaha daridra satāyō)⁴.

[⁴Here, the word ‘poverty’ is not only related to lack of material wealth and things of material comfort in this physical world but also to lack of resources and abilities that would eliminate one’s spiritual problems and discomfort arising from it, and give him internal and eternal peace instead.]

(How stupid and foolish I am that—) I have a symbolic Kalpa Tree (the legendary Tree of heaven that can give all desired fruits in the form of fulfilment of all wishes) right in my own (heart-like) house, but abandoning it or ignoring it, I divert my mind and look greedily towards the garden of Acacia (Babul) trees representing the sense organs and their objects in this material, illusionary and deluding world (apanēhi dhāma nāma-surataru taji biṣaya-babūra-bāga mana lāyō)⁵.

[⁵I forget that nothing but dry and pricking thorns are to be found in the Acacia tree symbolised by this gross external world and its sense objects. I, in my ignorance and foolishness, overlook the evergreen Kalpa Tree of contentedness and bliss symbolised by my pure conscious ‘self’ or ‘soul’ that blossoms inside the symbolic garden of my own heart. Therefore, I search for peace and happiness and joy and comfort in the external world instead of peeping inside my own ‘self’ to seek them. Say, if I am so stupid, who can help me?

Here, the ‘Kalpa Tree’ also symbolises the virtues of devotion, love and faith for Lord God, i.e. for Lord Ram, that a person has in his heart. This is enough to provide him all spiritual benefits that he wants. But the person is so deluded that he turns a blind eye to this eternal source of redemption and instead falls in the trap of worldly charms and temptations.] (4).

The Purans have said (purānani gāyō) that there is no one who is more wise, enlightened, intelligent and knowledgeable than you (Lord Ram—because you are omniscient and all-knowing) (tuma-sama gyāna-nidhāna), and there is no one more stupid and dud than me anywhere in this world (mōhi sama mūrha na āna).

Keeping this in mind and taking this fact into consideration, oh Lord, do whatever you think fit for this humble Tulsidas (tulasidāsa prabhu! yaha bicāri jiya kījai nātha ucita mana bhāyō)⁶.

[⁶To wit, I am not trying to preach you when I say what I said in this and all other verses. What I intend to say is that I acknowledge my own shortcomings and limitations, but at the same time I wish to remind you of your own exalted stature and reputation which says that you have always taken special care of the lowly and the humble creatures like me. So what if I have no wisdom and wherewithal to take care of my temporal welfare and spiritual well-being: after all, don’t you promise that you will ensure this for all the creatures who have surrendered themselves before you and taken shelter in your holy feet? So then, you must also take care of Tulsidas.] (5).

[Note—Refer to verse nos. 168 also as it also relates to this theme of ‘why a creature is unhappy’.]

My treacherous mind and intellect

(245)

मोहि मूढ़ मन बहुत बिगोयो ।
याके लिये सुनहु करुनामय, मैं जग जनमि—जनमि दुख रोयो ॥1॥
सीतल मधुर पियूष सहज सुख निकटहि रहत दूरि जनु खोयो ।
बहु भाँतिन श्रम करत मोहबस, बृथहि मंदमति बारि बिलोयो ॥2॥
करम—कीच जिय जानि, सानि चित, चाहत कुटिल मलहि मल धोयो ।
तृषावंत सुरसरि बिहाय सठ फिरि—फिरि बिकल अकास निचोयो ॥3॥
तुलसिदास प्रभु! कृपा करहु अब, मैं निज दोष कछू नहिं गोयो ।
डासत ही गइ बीति निसा सब, कबहुँ न नाथ! नींद भरि सोयो ॥4॥

(245)

mōhi mūr̥ha mana bahuta bigōyō.
 yākē liyē sunahu karunāmaya, maim̐ jaga janami-janami dukha rōyō. 1.
 sītala madhura piyūṣa sahaja sukha nikaṭahi rahata dūri janu khōyō.
 bahu bhām̐tina śrama karata mōhabasa, br̥thahi mandamati bāri bilōyō. 2.
 karama-kīca jiya jāni, sāni cita, cāhata kuṭila malahi mala dhōyō.
 tr̥ṣāvanta surasari bihāya saṭha phiri-phiri bikala akāsa nicōyō. 3.
 tulasidāsa prabhu! kṛpā karahu aba, maim̐ nija dōṣa kachū nahim̐ gōyō.
 dāsata hī ga'i bīti nisā saba, kabahum̐ na nātha! nīnda bhari sōyō. 4.

Verse no. 245—Alas! This treacherous and foolish Mana (mind and heart complex of mine) has deceived me a lot and has led me astray, making me suffer horribly as a result (mōhi mūr̥ha mana bahuta bigōyō).

Listen oh merciful, benevolent and compassionate Lord (sunahu karunāmaya)! It is due to this that I had to take birth repeatedly in this world, and roamed about weeping and wailing everywhere (about my misfortunes and miseries) (yākē liyē maim̐ jaga janami-janami dukha rōyō)¹.

[¹Alas! My Mana hooked itself to this gross world of material sense objects and their illusionary charm. It was so deluded that inspite of observing miseries all around and seeing the doomed fate of creatures who were engrossed in the world, it failed to draw any lesson. In its ignorance it failed to see where its true good and well-being lay. So it longed for this world and got trapped in its web. This is the primary reason why I had to take repeated births in this mundane world as my desires and yearnings never ended or subsided. My mind failed me; it failed to remind me about the quintessential truth that my true happiness and welfare lies elsewhere—i.e. in the feet of Lord Ram, as this would not only give me true happiness and peace but also ensure my liberation and deliverance from the virtually endless cycle of transmigration. Woe betide to such a mind of mine that made me suffer interminably!]
 (1).

The source of soothing, sweet and nectar-like supreme bliss and happiness that is of an eternal and truthful nature lives very near to me, in fact it is inside my own self as my Atma or soul (because the latter is pure consciousness and an embodiment of true, eternal and supreme bliss as it is a microcosmic form of the macrocosmic Soul that is an enternal source of bliss, beatitude and felicity)—but under the deluding spell and evil influence of this wretched mind of mine, even my sub-conscious, my intellect and its discrimination faculty failed me as I forgot about this source residing in me. As a result, I thought that it is somewhere far away in a distance. (sītala madhura piyūṣa sahaja sukha nikaṭahi rahata dūri janu khōyō)².

[²So I went frantically searching for it here and there in this gross mundane world just like a man made mad by thirst goes after the water in a mirage seen in the hot desert, only to find that there is no water anywhere, but misery and more misery around.]

Out of my own ignoranc, delusions and stupidity, I had churned water in the expectation of extracting butter from it! I was so dud that I adopted numerous methods and laboriously churned the water in the hope of getting butter with which I would satiate my hunger with something soothing and comforting. (bahu bhām̐tina śrama karata mōhabasa, br̥thahi mandamati bāri bilōyō)³.

[³Just like it is extremely and utterly madness trying to have butter by churning ordinary water, I made a fool of myself by seeking happiness and bliss in the gross world and its material sense objects. Forsooth, I so foolishly indulged in sensual pleasures and objects of this mundane world, and stupidly tried to extract comfort and happiness from them. But what I got in return was an endless chain of misery and grief and suffering unbound.] (2).

Though I was aware that getting involved in worldly deeds and actions was akin to wading in thick slush and muck (because as soon as a creature gets involved in them, his mind and heart are mired in all sorts of sorrows, miseries, dismay, frustrations and misfortunes), but still I allowed myself to get smeared by this filth, kneading and squeezing this slush and muck in an attempt to find some water to quench my thirst (i.e. to get some semblance of satisfaction obtained by getting success in achieving one's desired goal or aim, which was to get happiness, comfort and joy). (*karama-kīca jiya jāni, sāni cita*).

But I discovered to my dismay, that instead of what I had set out to seek (i.e. happiness and joy), I got just the opposite. It was like trying to clean dirt with dirty water (*cāhata kuṭila malahi mala dhōyō*)⁴.

[⁴To wit, instead of happiness and joy and contentment that I thought I would get by doing so many deeds in this world as they would help me attain my goal, what I got by this involvement only made me sink deeper into the quagmire of misery and grief. I had heard that life in this world is centered around doing deeds, and one could make certain of his bright future by doing good and righteous deeds and taking right actions. But it is good in theory only, for the practical aspect is quite the contrary. I had to act in a world which is deeply soaked in and infected by severe disease of corruption and taints of all hues, and so it was not possible to work in an ideal and spiritually hygienic, sterilised and disinfected environment. The consequence was horrifying for me—I caught some of the most contagious of diseases that tarnish the soul. Oh my Lord God: I landed in a situation that was far worse than what I would have found if I had listened to my inner voice to abstain from involvement in this world altogether!]

I am thirsty, but I am so foolish and deluded that I try to wring the sky to squeeze some water out of its moisture instead of easily and directly drinking water to my heart's content from the river Ganges that flows nearby! (*trṣāvanta surasari bihāya saṭha phiri-phiri bikala akāsa nicōyō*)⁵.

[⁵To wit, in search of true, eternal and abiding happiness and contentedness, I mistakenly wander among the objects of the world which are as huge and unreachable as the sky. I only waste my energy and stoke my thirst further. Would it not have been better for me to search for this seemingly illusive happiness and joy by looking for it within my own self, in my Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and an image of the cosmic Soul or cosmic Consciousness. I would have been better off if I had searched inside my own heart for an eternal source of bliss and happiness as it is the seat of Lord Ram representing supreme bliss, beatitude and felicity.] (3).

Oh Lord of Tulsidas (i.e. Lord Ram—*tulasidāsa prabhu*)! I have come out clean and have not concealed even a single of my countless faults and shortcomings from you. Hence, (and since I am truthful—and this is a virtue—so) show your mercy, grace and kindness on me now (*krpā karahu aba, mairiṁ nija dōṣa kachū nahiriṁ gōyō*).

I had spent the entire night trying to spread my bedsheet (upon which I could lie down to take some rest and find some peace), but oh Lord, I could not sleep properly (ḍāsata hī ga'i bīti nisā saba, kabahum' na nātha! nīnda bhari sōyō)⁶.

[⁶To wit, I wasted my life trying to acquire happiness, peace and contentedness, but never got it. I never found the state of rest and tranquillity of the soul that comes with enlightenment and self-realisation as this was possible only if you had been merciful to me, or only if I had realised the falsehood of the world and truthfulness of the soul. I am feeling very distraught, and request you to have mercy and compassion on me at least now; please be kind to reassure me of that supreme sense of bliss and contentedness that comes to one when he is assured that his liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation is certain, when he is assured that no longer would he have to suffer from the endless miseries and torments that are invariably associated with the cycle of transmigration.] (4).

[Note—Refer also verse nos. 143, 196 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.]

Why is there no peace?

(246)

लोक—बेद हूँ बिदित बात सुनि—समुझि
 मोह—मोहित बिकल मति थिति न लहति ।
 छोटे—बड़े, खोटे—खरे, मोटेऊ दूबरे,
 राम! रावरे निबाहे सबहीकी निबहति ॥1॥
 होती जो आपने बस, रहती एक ही रस,
 दुनी न हरष—सोक—साँसति सहति ।
 चहतो जो जोई जोई, लहतो सो सोई सोई,
 केहू भाँति काहूकी न लालसा रहति ॥2॥
 करम, काल, सुभाउ गुन—दोष जीव जग मायाते,
 सो सभै भाँह चकित चहति ।
 ईसनि—दिगीसनि, जोगीसनि—मुनीसनि हू,
 छोड़ति छोड़ाये तें, गहाये तें गहति ॥3॥
 सतरंजको सो राज, काठको सबै समाज,
 महाराज बाजी रची, प्रथम न हति ।
 तुलसी प्रभुके हाथ हारिबो—जीतिबो नाथ!
 बहु बेष, बहु मुख सारदा कहति ॥4॥

(246)

lōka-bēda hūm' bidita bāta suni-samujhi
 mōha-mōhita bikala mati thiti na lahati.
 chōṭē-barē, khōṭē-kharē, mōṭē'ū dūbarē,
 rāma! rāvarē nibāhē sabahīkī nibahati. 1.
 hōtī jō āpanē basa, rahatī ēka hī rasa,
 dunī na haraṣa-sōka-sāmśati sahati.
 cahatō jō jō'ī jō'ī, lahatō sō sō'ī sō'ī,

kēhū bhām̐ti kāhūkī na lālasā rahati. 2.
 karama, kāla, subhā'u guna-dōṣa jīva jaga māyātē,
 sō sabhai bhaunha cakita cahati.
 īsani-digīsani, jōgīsani-munīsani hū,
 chōṛati chōṛāyē tēm, gahāyē tēm gahati. 3.
 satarañjakō sō rāja, kāṭhakō sabai samāja,
 mahārāja bājī racī, prathama na hati.
 tulasī prabhukē hātha hāribō-jītibō nātha!
 bahu bēṣa, bahu mukha sārādā kahati. 4.

Verse no. 246—Oh Lord Ram, the King of Kings (rāma! rāvarē)! It is well established in the Vedas and well known in the world (lōka-bēda hūm̐ bidita), it is also heard and understood by all (bāta suni-samujhi), but due to delusions and ignorance this mind of mine fails to realise its import, and therefore remains agitated and perplexed (mōha-mōhita bikala mati thiti na lahati).

It is so agitated and mired in a lot of confusion, bewilderment, debates and dilemmas that I am unable to decide and be convinced of the fact that big or small, good or bad, thin or fat (chōṭē-barē, khōṭē-kharē, mōṭē'ū dūbarē)—in short, all creatures have their good, their welfare and well-being ensured at your hands, and that all of them are sustained and taken care by you (nibāhē sabahīkī nibahati)¹.

[¹To wit, it is your grace, mercy and benevolence that has sustained every single individual living being in this world, even those who are unjust, corrupt, sinful and evil, just like the sun that sustains life in this world by its rays that give light and heat and energy to the entire world irrespective of the fact that the world recognises this magnanimity of the sun or not. The sun does not distinguish between the good and the bad when it shows its light on the world, and likewise you also do not differentiate between your devotee and others when you give them equal treatment. But of course it is true that you do have a soft corner for your devotees and ensure that they are protected by all means. For the rest of the creatures, you punish and reward them according to their deeds.

But I am so stupid that in spite of knowing that you are there to take care of me, I go around seeking favours from others in this world. I harbour doubts in my mind about this fact that you would take excellent care of me.] (1).

If my mind and intellect had been under my control then they would have remained stable and decisive (because I want stability, eternal peace and freedom from agitations and uncertainties) (hōtī jō āpanē basa, rahatī ēka hī rasa).

Why would then it had subjected itself to uncertainties and fickleness by seeking worldly joys, getting disturbed by sorrows and miseries, or been troubled by tribulations and misfortunes associated with this mundane world? In this process, it dragged me along and subjected me to interminable grief, pain and misery; both me and my Buddhi suffered in this process (dunī na haraṣa-sōka-sāmsati sahati). [Did my mind and its intellect not know that all these worldly things are temporary and transient as the world itself? So what was the point in getting agitated itself, and also drawing me alongside it into this quagmire?]

It could have easily got what I had wanted it to get just if it had been steady in its quest, instead of being fickle and unstable (cahatō jō jō'ī jō'ī, lahatō sō sō'ī sō'ī). All my desires would have been fulfilled and nothing more left to be had (kēhū bhām̐ti kāhūkī na lālasā rahati)².

[²Since everyone desires to have stable peace and happiness, so if my mind had believed in the scriptures and what great and self-realised sages and saints have said—that true happiness is not to be found in the external world of material sense objects but in one’s own ‘self’ in his Atma because it is a source of eternal peace and bliss as well as an abode of Lord God from whom all glories emerge—then it would have stabilised itself and focused on this goal. Instead, it ran after the world of mirage, and dragged me along, making me slip and fall on the slippery ground of uncertainties and vexations. Say, how can I find peace in this situation? If my mind and intellect had shown some wisdom, then they would have sought an eternal source of bliss, peace and happiness that resides inside my heart as my Atma that is pure consciousness and an image of Lord Ram, instead of sweating it out for its search in the heat of the external world.] (2).

But I must not blame the Buddhi alone. The actual fact and the prevailing condition is quite different. It is your ‘Maya’ (the overriding power to create delusions) that played havoc with my Buddhi and with me.

Everything in this world, such as ‘Karma’ (deeds and actions), ‘Kaal’ (time and circumstance), ‘Swavhava’ (one’s nature, habits and temperament), ‘Guna’ (good qualities and characters), ‘Dosha’ (bad qualities and faults)—all of them are under the influence of your Maya (*karama, kāla, subhā'u guna-dōṣa jīva jaga māyātē*). [So therefore, even if my Buddhi had been right and wise when it advised me to do deeds and take actions in this world so as to pave the path for my bright future, all my efforts were interfered with by Maya, and this rascal threw a spanner in the wheel of my good intentions and sincere endeavours to make me fall from my chosen destiny.]

This Maya of yours, oh Lord, though being very bold and stubborn left to its own accord, is however very scared of you and stunned by your might so much so that it keeps looking at your eyebrows to judge your emotions and see whether or not any of its actions has displeased you (*sō sabhai bhaunha cakita cahati*)³.

[³To wit, if anything done by Maya displeases you which would be evident when you raise your eyebrows in annoyance, the Maya would immediately take remedial action to undo its misdeeds. This helps your devotees because you would not like this Maya to create mischief with them, so as soon as it observes that any of its actions against your devotees has annoyed you it immediately leaves them alone! These facts have been expressly mentioned in the epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 59; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 60; (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 62; (iv) from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 72; and (v) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 117.]

[What to talk of ordinary humans, this Maya is so powerful that—] Even Lord Shiva, Brahma the creator, the Digpals (custodians of the different corners of the world), the Yogis (ascetics) and Munis (sages and hermits) (*īsani-digīsani, jōgīsani-munīsani hū*)—all of them are caught and ensnared by the Maya’s strong grip over them. They are freed from this vice-like grip of Maya only when you so wish (*chōṛati chōṛāyē tēm, gahāyē tēm gahati*). [To wit, it is not so easy to break free from the clutches of Maya.] (3).

The kingdom or playing field of Maya (i.e., the whole gamut of illusions created by it) is like a chess-board (where everything is uncertain, and where gain and loss have no real bearing on one’s actual life—“*sataranjakō sō rāja*”), and where all the pieces

are made of wood (i.e., where all the participants are dud and as good as dead, are life-less and worthless—“kāṭhakō sabai samāja”)⁴.

[⁴The chess-board has all lifeless pieces, but they are assigned forms and names as if they were real entites—pieces designed like a king, a queen, a fort, a horse, a soldier. But all of them are unreal. But as long as two persons are playing this game they become so engrossed in it that they lose awareness of everything else, take each piece as for real, and oftentimes a loss of some piece lead to huge quarrel and a complete loss of the game may end in swords drawn for a real fight! Is it not incredulous and absurd, but it does happen. So likewise is the affect of Maya—it makes even the wises of men believe in falsehoods and get sucked in a vortex of delusions and its associated problems.]

Tulsidas says, ‘Oh the great King of Kings (i.e. Lord Ram— mahārāja)! This game is the creation of Maya; it was not like this in the beginning (bājī racī, prathama na hati). So getting emotionally affected by either winning or losing this game of chess depends on what one thinks it to be, for the fate of this game is in the hands of the Lord as he controls Maya (tulasī prabhukē hātha hāribō-jītibō nātha)⁵.

[⁵To wit, if one is wise enough to understand that after all this is merely a ‘game’, then he remains cheerful whether he loses or wins the game. Otherwise, he gets unnecessarily perturbed and excited about every move, worries about his win or loss, and at the end of the game he feels exhausted and drained of all his energy, feeling far worse than what he felt at the beginning of the game. So, if one understands that seeking spiritual peace and bliss is possible only when one surrenders before Lord Ram and develops devotion and faith in him, then surely he will succeed in it as the Lord would help him in his endeavours and Maya would not dare to interfere. Otherwise, a person is left on the mercy of Maya and his destiny.]

This fact has been proclaimed and reiterated by Saraswati (goddess of learning, knowledge and wisdom) in many forms and by many mouths (bahu bēṣa, bahu mukha sārādā kahati)⁶.

[⁶All the experts of different denominations have unanimously asserted and delcared that entrapments of the world and liberation from them are both in the hands of a person himself. If he is wise and erudite, he would surrender himself to the supreme Lord and do his deeds as a service to the Lord, not worrying about their results. This would give him his peace of mind and a rest for his soul. Otherwise, there is no use in blaming Lord Ram for the miseries in which the person finds himself in.] (4).

[Note—Refer also to verse no. 120, stanza no. 5 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.]

Advice to the Tongue [The Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma’s Holy Name]

(247)

राम जपु जीह! जानि, प्रीति सों प्रतीत मानि,
रामनाम जपे जैहै जियकी जरनि ।
रामनामसों रहनि, रामनामकी कहनि,

कुटिल कलि—मल—सोक—संकट—हरनि ।।1।।
 रामनामको प्रभाउ पूजियत गनराउ,
 कियो न दुराउ, कही आपनी करनि ।
 भव—सागरको सेतु, कासीहू सुगति हेतु,
 जपत सादर संभु सहित घरनि ।।2।।
 बालमीकि ब्याध हे अगाध—अपराध—निधि,
 'मरा' 'मरा' जपे पूजे मुनि अमरनि ।
 रोक्यो बिंध्य, सोख्यो सिंधु घटजहुँ नाम—बल,
 हास्यो हिय, खारो भयो भूसुर—डरनि ।।3।।
 नाम—महिमा अपार, सेष—सुक बार—बार
 मति—अनुसार बुध बेदहू बरनि ।
 नामरति—कामधेनु तुलसीको कामतरु,
 रामनाम है बिमोह—तिमिर—तरनि ।।4।।

(247)

rāma japu jīha! jāni, prīti sōm pratīta māni,
 rāmanāma japē jaihai jiyakī jarani.
 rāmanāmasōm rahani, rāmanāmakī kahani,
 kuṭila kali-mala-sōka-saṅkaṭa-harani. 1.
 rāmanāmakō prabhā'u pūjiyata ganarā'u,
 kiyo na durā'u, kahī āpanī karani.
 bhava-sāgarakō sētu, kāsīhū sugati hētu,
 japata sādara sambhu sahita gharani. 2.
 bālamīki byādha hē agādha-aparādha-nidhi,
 'marā' 'marā' japē pūjē muni amarani.
 rōkyō bindhya, sōkhyō sindhu ghaṭajahamū nāma-bala,
 hāraiō hiya, khārō bhayō bhūsurā-ḍarani. 3.
 nāma-mahimā apāra, sēṣa-suka bāra-bāra
 mati-anusāra budha bēdahū barani.
 nāmarati-kāmadhēnu tulasīkō kāmataru,
 rāmanāma hai bimōha-timira-tarani. 4.

Verse no. 247—Oh my Tongue (jīha)! Chant Lord Ram's holy name constantly and consistently (rāma japu), understand its essence and glorious spiritual values, develop affection for it, and have faith and belief in it (jāni, prīti sōm pratīta māni)¹.

[Do you know why? Well, I shall tell you the reason now.] By the chanting of this single holy name of Lord Sri Ram, your heart-burn due to the three Traitaps² would calm down (rāmanāma japē jaihai jiyakī jarani).

Involve yourself in chanting Lord Sri Ram's holy name as if that is the only work you have and it is your identity (rāmanāmasōm rahani). Speak nothing else but Lord Sri Ram's name (rāmanāmakī kahani).

This sort of refuge in the holy name of the Lord is extremely rewarding and beneficial for you as it eliminates all the sufferings and miseries inflicted upon the creature due to the countless sins, numerous types of sorrows and torments, and the untold difficulties and seemingly insurmountable problems that are associated with

life during the present era know as Kaliyug which is inherently malicious, corrupt, deceitful, crooked and wicked (*kuṭila kali-mala-sōka-saṅkaṭa-harani*).

[¹The outstanding divine nature and the immensity of the glorious spiritual powers and values of the holy name of Lord Ram have been sung in countless scriptures. Some of these examples are the following: (i) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad which is part of the Atharva Veda; (ii) Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28; (iii) Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 89-93, 178; and (iv) this present Book 'Vinai Patrika', verse nos. 46, 65-70.

²The 'three Taaps', or the Traitaap, refer to the following torments and tribulations that horrify all living beings: (i) Adhyatmic—related to one's spiritual welfare; (ii) Adhibhautic—related to worldly affairs; and (iii) Adhidaivic—related to adverse gods and opposed stars.] (1).

Lord Ganesh is worshipped first (i.e., in the beginning of any religious ceremony or ritual)³ due to the grace, the potential powers and the influence of Sri Ram's holy name (*rāmanāmakō prabhā'u pūjiyata ganarā'u*). Ganesh has himself declared this very frankly, and had kept nothing concealed (*kiyō na durā'u, kahī āpanī karani*).

This Sri Ram's holy name is like a bridge that enables the creature to across the ocean-like gross world of mundane existence (*bhava-sāgarakō sētu*). This is the reason why Lord Shiva, accompanied by his consort Parvati⁴, chants this holy name himself with the greatest of reverence in Kashi (Varanasi) in order to give salvation to those who die there (*kāsihū sugati hētu japata sādara sambhu sahita gharani*)⁵.

[³Lord Ganesh's story in brief: Once there was a dispute among the Gods regarding who was to be worshipped first amongst them. It was decided that he who circles the universe first shall be the winner. All the Gods mounted their respective vehicles and dashed out. Shiva's son Ganesh was fat, pot bellied and his mount was the meek mouse. Finding him in consternation, sage Narad advised him to write the name of Sri Ram and go around it—for that would be tantamount to going round the entire creation. In the final judgement, Ganesh won. This story emphasises the glory and importance of Ram's holy name.

⁴Refer 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 19.

⁵Refer 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108.] (2).

Valmiki, who was a hunter and bandit by nature, had innumerable sins and countless evil deeds standing to his discredit and undermining any good prospects for his future (*bālamiki byādha hē agādha-aparādha-nidhi*), but by chanting the name of Sri Ram in the reverse order as 'Mara-Mara' he became so pure and exalted that even the hermits, the sages and the gods worshipped and revered him (*'marā' 'marā' japē pūjē muni amarani*)⁶.

Sage Agastya (*ghaṭajahamū*) had stopped Mt. Vindhya (from expanding further)⁷ and had dried up the ocean (by drinking it) on the strength of this one name (*rōkyō bindhya, sōkhyō sindhu nāma-bala*). Later on, being ashamed of itself and scared of the sage, the ocean became extremely 'bitter' (or salty) (*hārāiō hiya, khārō bhayō bhūsurā-ḍarani*).

[⁶Refer 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19; and 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 151, stanza no. 7, and verse no. 156, stanza no. 2.

⁷The story of sage Agastya and Mt. Vindhyachal: Mt. Vindhyachal was a huge, lofty mountain, so high that the sun's rays scorched the trees, creepers and animals living on it. Infuriated, it decided to obstruct the sun altogether; so it started rising. Scared that this would be calamitous for ecology, the Gods approached sage Agastya to find a solution. The sage pronounced Sri Ram's holy name, put a hand over the peak of Vindhyachal and asked it to lie down. It lies there ever since. This incident as well as the gulping of the entire ocean by uttering Ram's name thrice are cited by Tulsidas to highlight the glory and potent of Ram's holy name.

The story of sage Agastya drinking the water of the ocean has been narrated in a note appended to verse no. 13, stanza no. 5 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'. Refer also to 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 32.] (3).

The glory, fame, renown, potent, powers and spell of Sri Ram's holy name are immense, astounding and measureless (nāma-mahimā apāra).

Shesh-Nath (the legendary serpent), Shukdeo (the sage parrot), the Vedas and Pandits (expert in scriptures) have repeatedly and assertively described it according to their wisdom and intellect (sēṣa-suka bāra-bāra mati-anusāra budha bēdahū barani).

For Tulsidas, having affection and endearment for Sri Ram's holy name is akin to having a Kamdhenu Cow and the Kalpa Tree by his side (nāmarati-kāmadhēnu tulasīkō kāmataru)⁸.

[⁸To wit, just like these two, the 'Cow' and the 'Tree', would give a person any and every thing he wants, the holy and divine name of Lord Ram also would fulfil every desire of a person who utters it. Tulsidas says that he has got an honourable position in society and has gained eligibility for emancipation, salvation and supreme bliss by just relying on the strength of Sri Ram's holy name.]

What more, this divine and holy name of Lord Ram is like the 'sun' itself for the purpose of removing the darkness of ignorance and delusions (rāmanāma hai bimōha-timira-tarani)⁹.

[⁹Even as the 'sun' instantly removes the darkness of the night, Lord Ram's name also immediately dispels all horrors arising out of ignorance and delusions.] (4).

[Note—Refer also to verse nos. 129 and 237 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where an advice of a similar nature is given to the Tongue.]

Tulasīdāsa pleads with Lord Rāma for his grace

(248)

पाहि, पाहि राम! पाहि, रामभद्र, रामचंद्र!
 सुजस श्रवन सुनि आयो हौं सरन।
 दीनबन्धु! दीनता-दरिद्र-दाह-दोष-दुख
 दारुन दुसह दर-दुरित-हरन ॥१॥

जब जब जग—जाल ब्याकुल करम काल,
 सब खल भूप भये भूतल—भरन ।
 तब तब तनु धरि, भूमि—भार दूरि करि
 थापे मुनि, सुर, साधु, आश्रम, बरन ।।2।।
 बेद, लोक, सब साखी, काहूकी रती न राखी,
 रावनकी बंदि लागे अमर मरन ।
 ओक दै बिसोक किये लोकपति लोकनाथ
 रामराज भयो धरम चारिहु चरन ।।3।।
 सिला, गुह, गीध, कपि, भील, भालु, रातिचर,
 ख्याल ही कृपाल कीन्हे तारन—तरन ।
 पील—उद्धरन! सीलसिंधु! ढील देखियतु
 तुलसी पै चाहत गलानि ही गरन ।।4।।

(248)

pāhi, pāhi rāma! pāhi, rāmabhadra, rāmacandra!
 sujasa śravana suni āyō hauṁ sarana.
 dīnabandhu! dīnatā-daridra-dāha-dōṣa-dukha
 dārūna dusaha dara-durita-harana. 1.
 jaba jaba jaga-jāla byākula karama kāla,
 saba khala bhūpa bhayē bhūtala-bharana.
 taba taba tanu dhari, bhūmi-bhāra dūri kari
 thāpē muni, sura, sādhu, āśrama, barana. 2.
 bēda, lōka, saba sākhī, kāhūkī ratī na rākhī,
 rāvanakī bandī lāgē amara marana.
 ōka dai bisōka kiyē lōkapati lōkanātha
 rāmarāja bhayō dharama cārihu carana. 3.
 silā, guha, gīdha, kapi, bhīla, bhālu, rāticara,
 khyāla hī kṛpāla kīnhē tārana-tarana.
 pīla-ud'dharana! sīlasindhu! dhīla dēkhiyatu
 tulasī pai cāhata galāni hī garana. 4.

Verse no. 248—Oh Lord Sri Ram: protect me, save me (pāhi, pāhi rāma)! Oh Ram-Bhadra, oh Ram-Chandra¹: protect me, save me (pāhi, rāmabhadra, rāmacandra)!

Hearing about your excellent virtues, your grand reputation, your great fame and immense glories, I have come to seek shelter and refuge in your holy feet (sujasa śravana suni āyō hauṁ sarana).

Oh 'Dīnabandhu' (i.e. a friend of those who are without resources; who are utterly wretched, lowly, meek, downtrodden, distressed, neglected, helpless and hapless)! You are a destroyer of the great and intolerable fears, consternations, horrors, miseries and torments that are created (dārūna dusaha dara-durita-harana) for a living being due to 'dīnatā-daridra-dāha-dōṣa-dukha'² in this world. [To wit, oh Lord, I am extremely distraught and fearful. I am suffering intensely and immensely from the horrors associated with life in this world. I have heard that you are the greatest redeemer and a friend of those who have lost all other hopes. So I have come to surrender before you to seek your mercy. I see no hope anywhere except

you. And I am very hopeful of being graced by you as this is your reputation which you can't deny.]³

[¹These two are among the 1000 names of Lord Sri Ram. Literally they mean 'the gentleman Ram', and 'Ram who is as sweet, pleasing and lovely as the Moon'.

²Dīnatā = to be devoid of all resources; to be meek, downtrodden, neglected, wretched, humble, helpless and hapless; to be distressed.

Daridra = to be poor and impoverished; to lack all worldly resources that gives a person basic comfort and happiness.

Dāha-dōṣa-dukha = to be distressed and suffer; to be subjected to countless woes, fears, horrors, torments and miseries caused by numerous faults, shortcomings and defects found in a person; the intolerable pain and suffering caused by sins, evil tendencies and vices that ensnare a creature.

³A similar plea was made by Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka, when he came to seek refuge in the holy feet of Lord Ram. The Lord had cheerfully accepted him, proclaiming that it is his declared position to accept all those who are distressed and come to seek relief from the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 45.] (1).

Whenever saints, sages, hermits and others who were pious and pure at heart became agitated and perplexed because of their getting trapped in the web or snare represented by this gross and deluding world either due to their own deeds or the unavoidable circumstances in which they unfortunately found themselves (**jaba jaba jaga-jāla byākula karama kāla**), and also whenever the kings and other rulers of the earth became too wicked, crooked, unrighteous and unscrupulous so as to become a burden on the earth and its inhabitants (**saba khala bhūpa bhayē bhūtala-bharana**)—then in all those times you had manifested yourself as an incarnation by assuming a body (which was essentially an image of your cosmic divine form—“**taba taba tanu dhari**”) so as to eliminate those who had become a burden on the earth (**bhūmi-bhāra dūri kari**), to restore the peace, honour and dignity of pious souls, saints and gods, and to restore the rule of Dharma⁴ (i.e. the laws of righteousness, probity, propriety, and nobility of conduct and thought) and its various Ashrams and Varanas (branches) by reinstating and rehabilitating the principles of righteousness, probity, propriety, civilised behaviour, noble conduct etc. that had been lost and trampled upon (**thāpē muni, sura, sādhu, āśrama, barana**)⁵.

[⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 121 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it.

⁵There are four 'Ashrams' and four 'Varanas' in Hindu society have been briefly described in a note appended to verse no. 139, stanza no. 4 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'. They are as follows:

(a) The four 'Ashrams'—Brahmacharya, Grishastha, Vaanprastha and Sanyas.

(b) The four 'Varanas'—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

Refer also to verse no. 192, stanza no. 2.] (2).

Both the Vedas as well as all the creatures of the world are witness to the fact (**bēda, lōka, saba sākhī**) that when the demon king Ravana of Lanka had become so cruel, merciless, arrogant and ruthless that he respected none, paid heed to no one, began to torment all the creatures and trampled underfoot the basic dignity and honour of all (**kāhūkī ratī na rākhī, rāvanakī**), and he had even subdued and imprisoned the gods who were put in shackles and languished in the prison interminably (suffering from

want of food, and maltreatment and humiliation by Ravan—“bandi lāgē amara marana”)—then oh Lord, it was you (in your incarnation as Lord Ram) who had come to the rescue of all such gods and guardians of the world, including Indra (the king of gods), Kuber (the treasurer of gods) and others, by offering them succour and providing them relief from their torments by liberating them from the bondage of Ravana. Then, you had restored their honour and dignity by reinstating them back to their respective domains and lordship of the world (from where they were dethroned by Ravana when he had usurped their powers and kingdoms) (ōka dai bisōka kiyē lōkapati lōkanātha)⁶.

Oh Lord Ram! During your reign, the laws of Dharma with its four pedestals⁷ were firmly established and practiced in all its variations (rāmarāja bhayō dharama cārihu carana).

[⁶This story is narrated in detail in Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 176—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 187.

Refer specially to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 182.

⁷The Holy Empire of Lord Ram and the prevalence of Dharma during his reign have been described in detail in (i) ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 20—to Doha no. 31; and (ii) ‘Geetawali Ramayan’, Lanka Kand, verse no. 22, and Uttar Kand, verse no. 1, 24.

Refer specially to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 20.

The “four bases or pedestals of Dharma” are said to be the following: Satya = truthfulness; Tapa = austerity, penance and enduring suffering for some noble cause; Daya = mercy and compassion for all; Daan = giving charity and alms without discrimination and self-interest. Dharma is based on these four grand qualities.] (3).

Oh the Merciful One (krpāla)! You had mysteriously and almost playfully (i.e., without effort and fan-fare) not only liberated but even elevated to an exalted stature even those who were never eligible for it. There are many examples of it, such as the Stone (i.e. Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, who had turned into a stone due to some curse), Guha (i.e. Nishad, the lowly boatman), the Vulture (i.e. Jatayu who had laid down his life to protect Sita as she was being kidnapped by Ravana), the Kapis (i.e. the monkeys such as Hanuman, Angad, Sugriv and the rest of them in the Lord’s army from Kishkindha), Bhil (the tribals such as Sabari and others whom the Lord blessed during his stay in the forest), the Bears (such as Jamvant), and the Demons (such as Vibhishan, Kumbhakaran and Ravana himself). (silā, guha, gīdha, kapi, bhīla, bhālu, rāticara).

You had not only taken care of their desiny by providing liberation and deliverance to all of them, but you had also elevated them from their lowly stature to such an exalted stature that they became liberators of others who would follow their example and learn from their stories (khyāla hī kīnhē tārana-tarana)⁸.

[⁸To wit, Lord Ram had not only liberated them individually from the cycle of birth and death, had annuled their sins and misdeeds so that they all became eligible for emancipation and salvation, but made them so holy and pure that others who would read about their lives and how they were blessed by the Lord would also benefit and become eligible for the Lord’s grace.]

Oh the Liberator of Gajraj (the Elephant) (pīla-ud'dharana)! Oh the Lord who is an ocean of noble virtues, excellent characters and righteousness (silasindhu)! This humble Tulsidas is drowning in sorrows and feels remorseful as he laments the

apparent neglect that he seems to be suffering at your hands (*tulasī pai cāhata galāni hī garana*). It appears that while you had gone out of your way to show exemplary grace, mercy, benevolence and compassion towards all those mentioned above, but when the turn of Tulsidas has come you do not seem to show the same enthusiasm and eagerness. You are seemingly ignoring him because while you had been so magnanimous and kind when liberating other rascals, you seem to develop a cold-feet when Tulsidas' turn comes up for consideration and redressal (*dhīla dēkhiyatu*)⁹.

[⁹To wit, oh Lord, I am feeling baffled, dismayed and sad because it seems you are indifferent to my fate and my plight though I am your humble devotee and faithful follower. Why Lord, tell me what my mistake is. Am I not as humble as the ones whom you have already liberated and delivered? So then, why should I be neglected? Lord, I say most earnestly that it is my humble prayer to you to be kind and gracious enough towards me also, and provide liberation and deliverance to me too.] (4).

Lord Śrī Rāma is a Peerless Lord

(249)

भली भाँति पहिचाने—जाने साहिब जहाँ लौं जग,
जूड़े होत थोरे, थोरे ही गरम।
प्रीति न प्रवीन, नीतिहीन, रीतिके मलीन,
मायाधीन सब किये कालहू करम॥1॥
दानव—दनुज बड़े महामूढ़ मूँड़ चढ़े,
जीते लोकनाथ नाथ! बलनि भरम।
रीझि—रीझि दिये बर, खीझि—खीझिघाले घर,
आपने निवाजेकी न काहूको सरम॥2॥
सेवा—सावधान तू सुजान समरथ साँचो,
सदगुन—धाम राम! पावन परम।
सुरुख, सुमुख, एकरस, एकरूप, तोहि
बिदित बिसेषि घटघटके मरम॥3॥
तोसो नतपाल न कृपाल, न कँगाल मो—सो
दयामें बसत देव सकल धरम।
राम कामतरु—छाँह चाहै रुचि मन माँह,
तुलसी बिकल, बलि, कलि—कुधरम॥4॥

(249)

bhalī bhām̐ti pahicānē-jānē sāhiba jahām̐ laum̐ jaga,
jūrē hōta thōrē, thōrē hī garama.
prīti na pravīna, nītihīna, rītikē malīna,
māyādhīna saba kiyē kālahū karama. 1.
dānava-danuja barē mahāmūr̐ha mūm̐ra car̐hē,
jītē lōkanātha nātha! balani bharama.

rījhi-rījhi diyē bara, khījhi-khījhighālē ghara,
 āpanē nivājēkī na kāhūkō sarama. 2.
 sēvā-sāvadhāna tū sujāna samaratha sām̐cō,
 sadaguna-dhāma rāma! pāvana parama.
 surukha, sumukha, ēkarasa, ēkarūpa, tōhi
 bidita bisēṣi ghaṭaghaṭakē marama. 3.
 tōsō natapāla na kṛpāla, na kam̐gāla mō-sō
 dayāmēṇ basata dēva sakala dharama.
 rāma kāmataru-chām̐ha cāhai ruci mana mām̐ha,
 tulasī bikala, bali, kali-kudharama. 4.

Verse no. 249—I have searched all over the world (everywhere), and I have properly understood and recognised all the lords there are in it. I have judged all of them as to how good or bad they are as masters and superiors to those who are dependent upon them and are subordinate to them. I have thoroughly judged their characters and qualities. (bhalī bhām̐ti pahicānē-jānē sāhiba jahām̐ laum̐ jaga).

I have now come to the following conclusion: On the one hand they are pleased with a tiny or a minimal effort (jūrē hōta thōrē), and on the other hand they become wrathful, vengeful and resentful on the slightest pretext and the slightest provocation (thōrē hī garama). They are neither inclined to have an abiding and sustainable relationship of affection and love with others, nor are they even aware of how to do it and its benefits (prīti na pravīna, nītiḥīna, rītikē malīna).

Indeed, all their actions, thoughts and behaviour are selfish, pervert and depraved by nature, for all of them do ‘Karma’ (i.e take actions and do deeds) under the overall influence of ‘Maya’ (delusions) and ‘Kaal’ (time and circumstance) (māyādhīna saba kiyē kālahū karama)¹.

[¹To wit, all the lords and masters are all under the tight grip of delusions and the negative influences of the time and circumstances in which they live, which of course is the present era known as Kaliyug that is innately corrupt and sinful. So they can’t think independently and correctly; all their judgements and actions are affected and conditioned by the tainting effects of Maya and Kaal. The result is that all their actions, deeds and behaviours become distorted and unrighteous. The sufferers in the process are their dependents and subordinates—as they cannot expect to have any permanent good and patronage from their so-called lords and masters, for as long as the latter are pleased with the former and their self-interests are served by them, they would help their dependents and subordinates. Otherwise, no one would recognise anyone.

Refer also to verse nos. 163, 229 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ in this context.]

(1).

Oh Lord of the world (lōkanātha nātha)! Under the false illusion of their invincibility, might and strength of arms (balani bharama), the great Demons and powerful Rulers (dānava-danuja) had become very egoist, haughty and arrogant so much so that it went to their heads. This made them lose their senses and bearing, and behave extremely foolishly. They failed to judge between what was right and proper, and what wasn’t. So they stupidly became pervert, reckless and sinful to the highest degree. (barē mahāmūr̐ha mūm̐ra caṛhē)

As a result they went berserk and even conquered their own patron Gods and Lokpals (i.e. the different custodians of the world—“jīṭē lōkanātha”) whom they had earlier pleased by becoming their disciples and doing Tapa (penances and austerities) to seek their blessings and beget boons from them. These Gods and Lokpals had been so short-sighted that they got easily pleased by the little effort made by these Demons and Rulers to appease them, and granted them full powers and absurd boons that one day would prove to be their own thorn (rījhi-rījhi diyē bara).

So when these Demons and Rulers began to defy the authority of the Gods and the Lokpals, the latter turned against the former who had been their own disciples and followers a little earlier, and whom these very Gods and Lokpals had granted the privileges of boons and blessings that they now want to reverse. Hence, when the Gods and the Lokpals became angry with the Demons and Rulers, they plotted to destroy them from their roots and eliminate their entire clans (khījhi-khījhighālē ghara).

None of them, i.e. the gods and the lokpals, felt ashamed or reluctant while destroying the same demons and rulers whom they pampered a little earlier with boons and blessings (āpanē nivājēkī na kāhūkō sarama)².

[²So it proves the truth of what has been said in stanza no. 1 herein above. Obviously, these lords and masters, i.e. the gods and the lokpals, were easy to please and as easy to annoy. When they were pleased, they willingly granted astounding powers even to demons who were not worthy of such grants, and when they were displeased these gods and lokpals had no compunctions in turning hostile towards their own beneficiaries, devotees and disciples whom they had once patronised and blessed so abundantly.

In the beginning these gods and lokpals had felt honoured when these demons and powerful rulers of the world such as emperors and kings were paying homage to them; the former were pleased by the austerities, sacrifices and penances that the latter did to appease them. So they gave them largesse and boons for the asking. But later on the same gods and lokpals became so wrathful, malicious and revengeful towards the same demons and rulers that they literally ‘burnt’ or destroyed the ‘houses’ symbolised by the entire clans and races of the demons and rulers.] (2).

Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! Oh Lord, you are truly wise and the only one who is really proficient in carefully taking note of who your devotees are, what their deeds are, and what their intentions are (sēvā-sāvadhāna tū sujāna samaratha sām̐cō)³.

[³To wit, Lord Ram may appear to be late in responding to a devotee’s call, but it is because the Lord first wants to make sure about the devotee’s trustworthiness, sincerity and honesty. This is because once the Lord accepts a person as his devotee, then it is going to be a lifetime bond. It is not like the case of the gods and the lokpals vis-à-vis their devotees such as the demons and rulers of the world: one day they were best of friends, and the next day they became sworn enemies. Lord Ram does not want to rush things through only to regret later on.

Actually, this position answers in a subtle way the question that arises in the mind of the reader as to why Lord Ram is apparently not paying heed to Tulsidas’ prayer for acceptance. It is because the Lord wants to determine how sincere and steadfast Tulsidas is in his devotion and affection for the Lord; would Tulsidas turn to

some other Lord who may be easy to please but as easy to annoy and antagonise, or would he stick with his decision of surrendering to Lord Ram, come what may.

By extension, this is an advice for all others—that they should persist and be steady with their faith and devotion for the Lord in order to ensure that their efforts bear fruit. The Lord is simply weighing them on his own scale; so one must have patience. And patience would be fully and perfectly rewarded with a reward that would thrill and fulfil the spiritual seeker no end.]

Oh Lord, you are an abode of all the best of virtues and characters (*sadaguna-dhāma*). You are most holy and pure (*pāvana parama*)! You are benevolent, friendly, pleasant, steady and unchanging (*surukha, sumukha, ēkarasa, ēkarūpa,*). You know the secret intentions of all and their inner thoughts because you are omniscient and all-pervading, living outside as well as inside the subtle space of the heart of all living beings; you are adept and proficient in knowing the secrets of the heart (*tōhi bidita bisēṣi ghaṭaghaṭakē marama*) (3).

Oh kind and merciful Lord (*krpāla*)! There is no one comparable to you in sustaining and taking proper care of those who are miserable, wretched, impoverished and lacking in resources but have come to seek refuge and take shelter in your holy feet (*tōsō natapāla na*), and there is no one who is a greater than me with respect to these characteristics (*na kamḡāla mō-sō*). So pardon me oh Lord, I must also get the same benefit that you give others⁴.

[⁴To wit, Lord Ram is known for his proficiency and eagerness in giving shelter and refuge to the most downtrodden and miserable of persons. Tulsidas pleads with the Lord that this being the case, he is also eligible for getting the Lord's attention for he too is very miserable and wretched in life, he too is suffering horribly and seeks relief from the gracious Lord. Tulsidas tells Lord Ram that under no condition should he be denied the privilege of the Lord's benevolence and mercy.]

Oh Lord (*dēva*)! All the laws of Dharma have their foundation in the virtue of mercy and compassion (*dayāmēṇ basata sakala dharama*). [Hence, you must show mercy and compassion towards me.]

Besides this, oh Lord, you are like a Kalpa-Tree (the holy Tree that provides whatever is wished for). I want to live under the shadow of this Kalpa-Tree known as 'Ram' (*rāma kāmataru-chāmṇha cāhai ruci mana māmṇha*). [I wish to take shelter under the shadow of this symbolic Tree by taking refuge in your holy feet so that all my wishes are fulfilled.]

I sincerely and truthfully submit myself before you and plead that this Tulsidas is greatly agitated and tormented by the crooked laws of Kaliyug, and that he wishes to seek solace and succour with you. [So please save him at the earliest.] (*tulasī bikala, bali, kali-kudharama*) (4).

Śrī Rāma is my only Lord & His Holy Name is the only Sustainer

(250)

तौ हौं बार बार प्रभुहि पुकारिकै खिझावतो न,

जो पै मोको होतो कहूँ ठाकुर—ठहरु ।
 आलसी—अभागे मोसे तैं कृपालु पाले—पोसे,
 राजा मेरे राजाराम, अवध सहरु ।।1।।
 सेये न दिगीस, न दिनेस, न गनेस, गौरी,
 हित कै न माने बिधि हरिउ न हरु ।
 रामनाम ही सों जोग—छेम, नेम, प्रेम—पन,
 सुधा सो भरोसो एहु, दूसरो जहरु ।।2।।
 समाचार साथके अनाथ—नाथ! कासों कहौं,
 नाथ ही के हाथ सब चोरऊ पहरु ।
 निज काज, सुरकाज, आरतके काज, राज!
 बूझिये बिलंब कहा कहूँ न गहरु ।।3।।
 रीति सुनि रावरी प्रतीति—प्रीति रावरे सों,
 डरत हौं देखि कलिकालको कहरु ।
 कहेही बनैगी कै कहाये, बलि जाउँ, राम,
 'तुलसी! तू मेरो, हारि हिये न हहरु' ।।4।।

(250)

tau hauṁ bāra bāra prabhuhi pukārikai khijhāvatō na,
 jō pai mōkō hōtō kahūṁ'ṭhākura-ṭhaharu.
 ālasī-abhāgē mōsē taim kṛpālu pālē-pōsē,
 rājā mērē rājārāma, avadha saharu. 1.
 sēyē na digīsa, na dinēsa, na ganēsa, gaurī,
 hita kai na mānē bidhi hari'u na haru.
 rāmanāma hī sōṁ jōga-chēma, nēma, prēma-pana,
 sudhā sō bharōsō ēhu, dūsarō jaharu. 2.
 samācāra sāthakē anātha-nātha! kāsōṁ kahaum,
 nātha hī kē hātha saba cōra'ū paharu.
 nija kāja, surakāja, āratakē kāja, rāja!
 būjhiyē bilamba kahā kahūṁ'na gaharu. 3.
 rīti suni rāvarī pratīti-prīti rāvarē sōṁ,
 ḍarata hauṁ dēkhi kalikālakō kaharu.
 kahēhī banaigī kai kahāyē, bali jā'um', rāma,
 'tulasī! tū mērō, hāri hiyē na haharu'. 4.

Verse no. 250—Oh Lord (prabhu)! If I had found any other Lord or a place for shelter (jō pai mōkō hōtō kahūṁ'ṭhākura-ṭhaharu), then I would not have repeatedly called out to you and displeased, irritated you and annoyed you with my persistence (tau hauṁ bāra bāra prabhuhi pukārikai khijhāvatō na).

Oh my great and merciful King, oh King of kings Sri Ram (rājā mērē rājārāma)! You have been so merciful and compassionate that you have sustained and looked after countless indolent, slothful, lithargic, unfortunate and hapless persons who were like me (ālasī-abhāgē mōsē taim kṛpālu pālē-pōsē).

Hence, you are my only King, and Ayodhya is the only city for me to reside in (because you had lived there once too) (rājā mērē rājārāma, avadha saharu) (1).

I have neither affectionately and sincerely served the Dikpals (the semi-gods who are the guardians of the world), the Sun, Lord Ganesh and goddess Parvati (the divine consort of Lord Shiva and the Mother Goddess) (sēyē na digīsa, na dinēsa, na ganēsa, gaurī), nor have I worshipped with devotion Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, the three senior Gods of the Trinity (kai na mālē bidhi hari'u na haru). Therefore, I can't and don't expect my welfare in their hands (hita kai na).

All my sustenance, well-being, welfare and livelihood is in, and by, the mystical, the holy and the divine name of Lord Sri Ram (rāmanāma hī sōm jōga-chēma). [Whatever I have obtained in this world is due to the grace of Lord Ram's name. I don't know of any other means and methods which has ever helped me in life.]

This holy name of the Lord is the only religious sacrament, observance and ritual that I believe in and practice (nēma); in it only do I have love and affection (prēma-pana).

For me, reliance on it is akin to accessing Amrit (nectar, elixir of life) which would give me peace and tranquillity (sudhā sō bharōsō ēhu), whereas all other methods and means, ways and paths are like poison for me (dūsarō jaharu) and I abhor them (2).

Oh the Lord of those who are desolate, destitutes and vagabonds (anātha-nātha)! What news can I give you and what shall I tell you about myself and the predicament that I find myself in (samācāra sāthakē kāsōm kahaum). All my companions are the same, whether they are thieves or guards by vocation (cōra'ū paharu)¹. All of them are under your command (as you are the Supreme Lord of creation), and therefore it would look bad for me to complain against them to you (nātha hī kē hātha saba cōra'ū paharu).

[¹The 'thieves' here refer to the many desires, passions and other vices, as well as other shortcomings and worldly temptations that rob the person of his peace of mind. The 'guards' are the good qualities in him as well as his mind and intellect that can help him fend off these thieves. Here, Tulsidas says that under the fear of these 'thieves' who have become very resourceful and strong due to the overwhelming influence of Maya during Kaliyug, the 'guards' have gone underground, leaving Tulidas at the mercy of the rascals. So he pleads with Lord Ram to protect him from these so-called thieves, and order the guards to extend their support to him.]

Oh King (rāja)! Think for yourself—have you ever delayed in doing your own work (nija kāja), or the work of Gods (surakāja), or the work of those who are miserable, distressed and sorrowful, needing urgent attention from you (āratakē kāja)? Then say, I fail to understand why is it getting so late in my case when I am pleading with you repeatedly (būjhiyē bilamba kahā kahūm' na gaharu)? [To wit, when you have shown great diligence in honouring your obligations to others, then I am bewildered and just can't understand why you are you so indifferent when my turn comes? Oh Lord, I expect you to show the same enthusiasm in extending your grace and mercy to me as you have shown while giving protection and shelter to others.] (3).

After having heard of your Lordship's excellent nature, wonderful glories, immaculate virtues and the golden rules that thou follow while extending your patronage to your devotees and followers (rīti suni rāvarī), I was so exceedingly impressed that I had developed affection and faith in you even as I decided to come to

surrender to you and take refuge with you (*pratīti-prīti rāvarē sōm*). But I feel scared when I look at havoc that Kaliyug (the present sinful times) has unleashed on all (*ḍarata hauṁ dēkhi kalikālakō kaharu*), because I feel that it would do its best to tear me away from you, or create some sort of mischief that would drive a wedge between you and me.

Oh Lord Ram (*rāma*)! I swear by you and plead with you (*bali jā'um*) that it would be enough for me if you just say directly to me, or convey your message by someone else (*kahēhī banaigī kai kahāyē*), that 'Oh Tulsidas, do not fear or worry in your heart; do not lose hope as you are mine and I shall take care of you! (*'tulasi! tū mērō, hāri hiyē na haharu*)' Verily indeed and in all sooth, this single hint would be sufficient to calm down my suffering and agony².

[²A similar idea is expressed in verse no. 253, stanza no. 3 herein below in this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.] (4).

Lord Śrī Rāma's Holy Form and Divinity; The importance of Bhakti (devotion)

(251)

राम! रावरो सुभाउ, गुन सील महिमा प्रभाउ,
जान्यो हर, हनुमान, लखन, भरत।
जिन्हके हिये—सुथारु राम—प्रेम—सुरतरु,
लसत सरस सुख फूलत फरत॥1॥
आप माने स्वामी कै सखा सुभाइ भाइ, पति,
ते सनेह—सावधान रहत डरत।
साहिब—सेवक—रीति, प्रीति—परिमिति, नीति,
नेमको निबाह एक टेक न टरत॥2॥
सुक—सनकादि, प्रहलाद—नारदादि कहैं,
रामकी भगति बड़ी बिरति—निरत।
जाने बिनु भगति न, जानिबो तिहारे हाथ,
समुझि सयाने नाथ! पगनि परत॥3॥
छ—मत बिमत, न पुरान मत, एक मत,
नेति—नेति—नेति नित निगम करत।
औरनिकी कहा चली? एकै बात भलै भली,
राम—नाम लिये तुलसी हू से तरत॥4॥

(251)

rāma! rāvarō subhā'u, guna sīla mahimā prabhā'u,
jān'yō hara, hanumāna, lakhana, bharata.
jinhakē hiyē-suthāru rāma-prēma-surataru,
lasata sarasa sukha phūlata pharata. 1.
āpa mārē svāmī kai sakhā subhā'i bhā'i, pati,
tē sanēha-sāvadhāna rahata ḍarata.

sāhiba-sēvaka-rīti, prīti-parimiti, nīti,
 nēmakō nibāha ēka ṭēka na ṭarata. 2.
 suka-sanakādi, prahalāda-nāradādi kahair̥ṃ,
 rāmakī bhagati baṛī birati-nirata.
 jānē binu bhagati na, jānibō tihārē hātha,
 samujhi sayānē nātha! pagani parata. 3.
 cha-mata bimata, na purāna mata, ēka mata,
 nēti-nēti-nēti nita nigama karata.
 auranikī kahā calī? ēkai bāta bhalai bhalī,
 rāma-nāma liyē tulasī hū sē tarata. 4.

Verse no. 251—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! The greatness, divinity, holiness, nobility and excellence of the Lord's essential nature and form, your immaculate character and magnificent virtues, their glories and stupendity (rāvarō subhā'u, guna sīla mahimā prabhā'u), are known to only a few highly wise and realised souls such as Lord Shiva (the Great God of the Trinity), Hanuman (the ardent and faithful devotee of Lord Ram who had played a stellar lead role in the Lord's campaign to eliminate the cruel demons), Laxman and Bharat (who were Lord Ram's younger brothers). They knew your essential form, who you actually were (jān'yō hara, hanumāna, lakhana, bharata)¹.

They knew that you were a manifested human form of the Supreme Being. So they revered and worshipped you with utmost sincerity and devotion. This is why in the garden of their lotus-like heart your love and devotion has struck a firm root and has grown to take the form of a symbolic Kalpa-Tree (the all wish-fulling tree of heaven) that gives succulent and sweet fruits of bliss, ecstasy, joy and happiness of a divine nature (jinhakē hiyē-suthāru rāma-prēma-surataru, lasata sarasa sukha phūlata pharata)².

[¹Lord Shiva regarded you as his patron deity; he meditated on your holy name, always kept chanting your holy name personally and also with the objective of granting deliverance and salvation to a dying man by uttering your holy name in the latter's ears. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3, 6 that precede Doha no. 19; (ii) Chanda no. 51 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it; and (iii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46;

Hanuman had recognised that Lord Ram was his true Lord whom he had been waiting to meet since his birth. So once the two met at the foothills of Rishyamook in Kishkindha, Hanuman surrendered himself to the Lord and spent the rest of his life serving and worshipping the Lord. Like Lord Shiva, Hanuman too silently kept on repeating the holy name of the Lord for the rest of his life. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 2—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 4; (ii) Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 7—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 8; and (iii) Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 19.

At the time when Lord Ram was departing for the forest for fourteen years with the purpose of eliminating the demons and freeing Mother Earth from their torments, Laxman had made his intention clear—that as far as he was concerned, there was no one dearer and nearer to him than Lord Ram. Even the Lord had recognised the truth of Laxman's statement and agreed to take him along to the forest. Laxman had been by the side of the Lord through his life, in thick and thin, being the

Lord's companion in cloud and sunshine. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Doha no. 71—to Doha no. 72.

Lord Ram's another brother was Bharat who was no less in having devotion for the Lord than was Laxman. There are countless instances narrated in the epic 'Ram Charit Manas' that establishes Bharat's devotion and reverence for Lord Ram. Some of the sterling instances are the following: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 178; and Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 181 which describe Bharat's love and devotion for Lord Ram at the time of his refusal to accept the crown of Ayodhya though everyone tried to convince him to do so; (ii) from Doha no. 207—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 219 when sage Bharadwaj had lavishly praised Bharat's love and devotion for Lord Ram; (iii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 222—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 223 when Bharat was praised by the ordinary people while he was on his way to meet Lord Ram in the forest; (iv) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 303—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 304 where everyone present during the meeting at Chitrakoot in the forest had praised Bharat's devotion for Lord Ram; (v) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 294 where the Gods had unequivocally acknowledged Bharat's devotion for Lord Ram; (vi) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 295 where goddess Saraswati has lauded Bharat's devotion for Lord Ram and expressly saying that Lord Ram lives in the heart of Bharat; and (vii) Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 232 where Lord Ram has profusely praised Bharat before Laxman.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 36 where Lord Ram himself has declared his affection for Bharat, saying that there is no difference between the two of them.

²Here, having devotion and love for the Lord is like having the heavenly Tree called 'Kalpa Tree' inside one's garden. This tree is not only all wish-fulfilling but also gives supreme form of bliss and happiness by its shade and fruits. Hence, those devotees of Lord Ram who have this symbolic tree in their garden-like heart are blessed and fortunate.

Those who come to realise and recognise the divinity and holiness of Lord Ram are filled with joy and ecstasy unbound so much so that they live in a perpetual state of bliss and beatitude. Their hearts are filled with devotion and love for the Lord.] (1).

[Describing the wonderful benefits that are got by the mutual trust, respect and love that a devotee and his Lord have for each other, Tulsidas cites the example of Shiva, Hanuman, Laxman and Bharat to drive home this point.]

On your (Lord Ram's) part, you have always treated Lord Shiva as your deity whom you worship and show reverence for³.

Likewise, you had treated Hanuman as your friend (and had embraced him affectionately, though he was a monkey by his physical body, and was as humble as the other monkeys in your army)⁴.

Then again, you have shown equal affection for both Laxman⁵ and Bharat⁶ and had always treated them equally as your brothers. [Though it was Bharat on whose count Lord Ram had to go to the forest because Bharat's mother Kaikeyi wanted her son to ascend the throne of Ayodhya, but the Lord harboured no ill-will against him, for he was sure that Bharat was innocent and had no role in this conspiracy. Again, though Laxman had sacrificed everything to accompany the Lord

to the forest, but Lord Ram showed no especial favour for him and never let Laxman feel that he was dearer to the Lord than Bharat. These facts are amply clear in the instances cited in the references of Ram Charit Manas cited herein below.] (*āpa mānē svāmī kai sakhā subhā'i bhā'i*).

On their part, Shiva, Hanuman, Laxman and Bharat had similarly showed the greatest of reverence for you, always treating you as their sole Lord and Master, as their sole benefactor whom they all worshipped like a deity. They are always steady and careful in their affection, love, devotion and faith in you (to ensure that these virtues are not diluted in the least). (*pati, tē sanēha-sāvadhāna rahata ḍarata*).

Verily indeed, in all sooth, and without gainsay, if both the servant and his master, if both the devotee and the deity whom he or she worships, learn to develop and foster this kind of mutual bond of affection, love, faith, trust and respect for each other, and fear to break this mutually accepted bond—then their relationship can never be broken, it can never come under strain whatsoever, it is cemented forever, it becomes so permanent and strong when it reaches its pinnacle that they cannot live without each other. (*sāhiba-sēvaka-rīti, prīti-parimiti, nīti, nēmakō nibāha ēka ṭēka na ṭarata*).

[³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha no. 2 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that preceed it, and Uttar Kand, Doha no. 45 where Lord Ram has declared Lord Shiva as his revered God.

⁴Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 30 where Lord Ram has embraced Hanuman; and Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 32 where Lord Ram has said that he would never be able to repay Hanuman's service to him.

⁵Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-16 that precede Doha no. 61 where Lord Ram has lamented for Laxman, saying that he was his dearest brother and comrade-in-arm, and that the Lord cannot live without Laxman. The incident was when Laxman was wounded during the war at Lanka.

⁶Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 232 where Lord Ram has declared there is no better brother that a person can ever have than Bharat is for him.] (2).

Shukdeo (the parrot saint), Sankadi (the seven celestial sages), Prahalad (the child devotee of the Lord), sage Narad (the celestial sage and son of the creator Brahma) and other enlightened devotees say with conviction and firmness (*suka-sanakādi, prahalāda-nāradādi kahairṇ*) that an eternal, pure and abiding form of 'Bhakti' (devotion) for Lord Sri Ram is attainable only when one develops complete and total sense of 'Vairagya' (renunciation, detachment and dispassion) from the world, from the temptations of its material sense objects, and from the desires having their origin in one's sense organs that want gratification (*rāmakī bhagati barī birati-nirata*).

But one cannot develop true and abiding Bhakti⁷ for you (i.e. for Lord Ram) without having 'Gyan' or the knowledge of the truth about your divine and holy form and nature⁸ (*jānē binu bhagati na*).

Oh Lord, the imparting of this knowledge, however, is in your hands—i.e. it depends upon your grace and mercy on the seeker (*jānibō tihārē hātha*). That is why those who are wise, sagacious and enlightened choose to surrender themselves at your holy feet (*pagani parata*) because then you would be bound to show your grace and mercy on them, thereby granting them your Bhakti most easily⁹ (*samujhi sayānē nātha*).

[⁷The glories and importance of ‘Bhakti’ and the fact that it grants immense bliss and joy to its practitioner have been elaborately described in ‘Ram Charit Manas’ in its Uttar Kand. Refer for instance: from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 45—to Doha no. 46; and Doha no. 85 Kha.

⁸This fact has been expressly stated in ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 127.

⁹To wit, when one is convinced that the Lord whom he worships is not an ordinary human prince of Ayodhya known by the name of ‘Ram’ but a personalised or manifested form of the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma, it is only then that he will have no hesitation in worshipping the Lord and treating him as his deity. If one knows about the reality and truth of the object of his admiration, about the fact that the person whom he admires is actually worthy of his admiration, then his respect for that person becomes robust, honest and steady. Otherwise his faith and respect may falter, and he may be overcome with so many doubts.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Doha no. 107; (ii) Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 129; (b) Aranya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 19 that precedes Doha no. 11; (ii) Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 13.] (3).

The six Shastras (see verse no. 173, stanza no. 5) have different perceptions (about the Lord) (*cha-mata bimata*); even the Purans do not agree with each other (*na purāna mata na ēka mata*), and the Vedas routinely declare that the Lord is ‘Neti-Neti’ (i.e., the is this as well as that, and neither this nor that; no one can be certain as to what is the true nature and form of the Lord or about the path that leads to him) (*nēti-nēti-nēti nita nigama karata*)—if these ancient scriptures that are regarded as authentic and exhaustive are so evasive about the Truth of the Lord, then say what can be said of others (*auranikī kahā calī*)?

[In this state of affairs, one can not be sure of which path to follow to attain the Lord and get eternal bliss and happiness. One is not certain which path to follow that would help him attain liberation and deliverance from his miseries and sorrows in this world. Hence, the safest bet is to surrender before Lord Ram and let the Lord himself take care of the devotee’s welfare.]

Tulsidas says that as far as he is concerned, taking refuge in and seeking the support of Lord Sri Ram's holy name seems to be the only good, wise and proper thing to do, and it is the only path that leads to one’s welfare, well-being and auspiciousness (*ēkai bāta bhalai bhalī*). This is because even people like him (who had never done any meritorious thing in life and had no chance of redemption) have sailed safely across this ocean-like mundane and mortal world full of delusions and horrors solely relying on the strength of Lord Ram’s holy name (*rāma-nāma liyē tulasī hū sē tarata*) (4).

The Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma & His Holy Name

(252)

बाप! आपने करत मेरी घनी घटि गई।
लालची लबारकी सुधारिये बारक, बलि,
रावरी भलाई सबहीकी भली भई॥१॥

रोगबस तनु, कुमनोरथ मलिन मनु,
 पर—अपबाद मिथ्या—बाद बानी हई।
 साधनकी ऐसी बिधि, साधन बिना न सिधि
 बिगरी बनावै कृपानिधिकी कृपा नई॥2॥
 पतित—पावन, हित आरत—अनाथनिको,
 निराधारको आधार, दीनबंधु, दई।
 इन्हमें न एकौ भयो, बूझि न जूझ्यो न जयो,
 ताहिते त्रिताप—तयो, लुनियत बई॥3॥
 स्वाँग सूधो साधुको, कुचालि कलितें अधिक,
 परलोक फीकी मति, लोक—रंग—रई।
 बड़े कुसमाज राज! आजुलौं जो पाये दिन,
 महाराज! केहू भाँति नाम—ओट लई॥4॥
 राम नामको प्रताप जानियत नीके आप,
 मोको गति दूसरी न बिधि निरमई।
 खीझिबे लायक करतब कोटि कोटि कटु,
 रीझिबे लायक तुलसीकी निलजई॥5॥

(252)

bāpa! āpanē karata mērī ghanī ghaṭi ga'ī.
 lālacī labārakī sudhāriyē bāraka, bali,
 rāvarī bhalā'ī sabahīkī bhalī bha'ī. 1.
 rōgabasa tanu, kumanōratha malina manu,
 para-apabāda mithyā-bāda bānī ha'ī.
 sādhanakī aisī bidhi, sādhana binā na sidhi
 bigarī banāvai kṛpānidhikī kṛpā na'ī. 2.
 patita-pāvana, hita ārata-anāthanikō,
 nirādhārakō adhāra, dīnabandhu, da'ī.
 inhamēm na ēkau bhayō, būjhi na jūjha'ō na jayō,
 tāhitē tritāpa-tayō, luniyata ba'ī. 3.
 svāmṅa sūdhō sādhuḥ, kucālī kalitēm adhika,
 paralōka phīkī mati, lōka-raṅga-ra'ī.
 barē kusamāja rāja! ājulaum jō pāyē dina,
 mahārāja! kēhū bhāmṭi nāma-ōṭa la'ī. 4.
 rāma ! nāmakō pratāpa jāniyata nīkē āpa,
 mōkō gati dūsarī na bidhi nīrama'ī.
 khījhibē lāyaka karataba kōṭi kōṭi kaṭu,
 rījhibē lāyaka tulasīkī nilaja'ī. 5.

Verse no. 252—Oh Father (bāpa)! I have ruined myself and my fate, my future and my destiny, with my own hands by doing evil deeds (āpanē karata mērī ghanī ghaṭi ga'ī). [Therefore, I can't blame anyone else.]

I (invoke your gracious, merciful and forgiving nature to) plead before you, I beg of you most humbly, truthfully and honestly (bali), to correct and mend my ruined fate at least for once (sudhāriyē bāraka) (by neutralising the negative and bad effects of the deeds already done by me, and forgive me for my mischief and

misdemeanours) though I am greedy and inconsistent in what I say (*lālacī labārakī*). Whosoever had been a beneficiary of your majesty's grace and mercy in the past (*rāvarī bhalāṭī*), all of them without exception have had their future made secure and safe, all of them got redemption from their sins and evil deeds (*sabahīkī bhalī bhaṭī*)¹.

[¹To wit, I am very sure that if you show mercy to me, I too will enjoy the same spiritual rewards that others who were as sinful and evil as myself had got; I too will feel blessed and sing your glories with a fluent tongue. It may be that you have doubts about my integrity and sincerity when I make this humble and earnest request for redemption because you know that I am a liar and a selfish person. You may think that I show so much humility and submissiveness to you now because I am so sore terrified at the prospects of my doomed fate that I may go to any length to find relief from its sufferings and pains, even making false promises of correcting my evil ways and remaining obliged to my redeemer for as long as I live, and that I may not be so serious about my prayers to you because once my objective is achieved, i.e. once you eliminate all the negative consequences of my past evil deeds and make me free from their horrifying effects, I would sooner or later revert to my bad old ways. But oh kind Lord, it is not the case. I have had enough of it, and I now want turn a leaf for good in my life, sincerely become your servant, serve you and do your bidding for all times to come.

I am not playing tricks with you by pretending to be sincere; I am sincere with my prayers for redemption! Hence oh Lord, be kind and show mercy to me. Showcase your virtue of benediction by protecting me and salvaging my desiny from complete ruin and doom.] (1).

[Outlining his sufferings, Tulsidas says—] My body is diseased (*rōgabasa tanu*); the Mana (mind and heart) is getting tainted with dark thoughts, it is becoming corrupted and pervert with countless forms of desire, passion and lust (*kumanōratha malina manu*); and the faculty of speech has been totally ruined and lost its true worth by criticising and speaking ill of others as well as indulging in heresies, lies, falsehoods and perjury (*para-apabāda mithyā-bāda bānī haṭī*).

These three units, i.e. the 'body', the 'mana' and the 'speech', are the three instruments or tools or means, known as 'Saadhan', by which a person can achieve his goal in life. It is a general rule-of-thumb that it is not possible to attain success in any endeavour without having necessary tools for it. In the spiritual field, these three units mentioned above are the vital tools by using which one is able to reach his goal. But say what would happen when these three instruments themselves are defective? (*sāadhanakī aisī bidhi, sādhana binā na sidhi*)².

[²Here, the goal is spiritual welfare and redemption of the soul, to attain liberation and deliverance as well as to get peace, happiness and bliss. If the instruments themselves by which one can attain these objectives are defective, say how can a person attain success in reaching his goal?]

So oh the merciful Lord (*krpānidhi*), in this precarious situation in which I find myself, my only hope lies in you. Your virtues of grace, kindness and mercy are so mystically empowered that my fractured destiny can be mended only by them. To wit, the only chance and hope for the betterment of my future is when you show your kindness, mercy and grace upon me (*bigarī banāvai krpānidhikī krpā naṭī*) (2).

[Now, Tulsidas outlines the wonderful glories of Lord Ram.] Oh Lord, you are the one who is a purifier and redeemer of the sinners, of those who are evil and vile (*patita-pāvana*). You are the universal benefactor and well-wisher of those who are distressed, miserable, sorrowful, destitute and desolate (*hita ārata-anāthanikō*). You are the support and solace for those who have no other means of support and help (*nirādhārakō adhāra*). You are a natural friend of those who are wretched, humble, lowly, downtrodden and miserable (*dīnabandhu*). And you are naturally, as a matter of habit and by your inherent temperament, most kind, merciful and gracious (*daī*).

But unfortunately oh Lord, I am not like any one of them (that would qualify me to receive your attention) (*inhamēṁ na ēkau bhayō*)³.

[³To wit, due to my ego, arrogance, haughtiness, and a misplaced sense of pride, I have never considered my self as being sinful, humble, sorrowful, destitute, helpless etc. to become eligible for receiving your kindness and mercy. Since I pretended to be a good and righteous person who has never sinned or felt sorrowful, I don't think you will pay attention to me on this count because you would be too busy taking care of such people who qualify for receiving your attention as described herein above.]

Thus, while on the one hand I have lost a chance of being eligible to receive your support and help to overcome my real-time miseries and horrors, and on the other hand I never was wise and courageous enough to fight my own battle to conquer my enemies (such as Kaam, Krodha, Moha, Mada etc., standing for worldly passions, anger, delusions, attachments, arrogance and haughtiness etc. respectively). (*būjhi na jūjhaīō na jayō*)

This is the reason why I am suffering so horribly due to torments caused by the three legendary tormentors in life, viz. 'Daihik, Daivik and Bhautik'^a (*tāhitē tritāpa-tayō*).

Verily indeed and forsooth, I am reaping what I sowed (*luniyata baī*)! [Why should I blame others for my miseries? My ego prevented me from surrendering before the Lord so that I could benefit from the Lord's largesse and seek help from him to get rid of my enemies, and my impotence and ineptness had prevented me from facing my enemies myself and defeating them. So I am left high and dry, in a lurch to face an uncertain future.]

[^bThe three tormentors are the following:- Daihak—sufferings related to one's body. Bhautik—sufferings related to terrestrial creatures and objects of this surrounding world. Daivik—sufferings caused by opposing Gods, demi-Gods and stars.] (3).

My appearances are like that of a humble, simple, pious and straight-forward person called a 'Sadhu' (*svām̐ga sūdhō sādhuḥkō*), but I even surpass the maliciousness and pervert nature of Kaliyug when it comes to doing sinful deeds and acting unrighteously (*kucāli kalitēṁ adhika*).

My mind-and-intellect complex finds no interest and taste in any talk concerning higher spiritual goals in life and other metaphysical subjects, such as attainment of self-realisation, enlightenment, liberation, deliverance, renunciation, detachment etc., and neither is it worried about its future and destiny after death (*paralōka phīkī matī*). But it seems ever so ready and eager to lend its ears to any

talk of the world and the charm of its material sense objects, to things that would gratify one's sense organs (*lōka-raṅga-ra'ī*). [To wit, I get bored when I hear someone talking about spiritual matters, but get excited when I hear about worldly temptations pertaining to sense organs. Say, how can I expect my good and welfare?]

Oh Great Lord (*mahārāja*)! Unfortunately, I am born in a place in the realm of a wicked king (here meaning Kaliyug) where I find myself surrounded by a sinful society where perversity and corruption abound (*barē kusamāja rāja*).

Whatever time I had unfortunately spent in the company of these wicked companions has already been spent, and it is history now (so I can't do anything about it) (*ājulaum jō pāyē dina*).

But at least somehow at this late stage I have managed to take the help and shelter of your glorious and divine name (*kēhū bhāmṭi nāma-ōṭa la'ī*)⁴.

[⁴So, notwithstanding how I had spent my past time and life surrounded by a wicked society, at least now I have caught hold of the anchor of your divine name that has the reputation of purifying the impure and taking to the shore he who is drowning. That clearly means that even at this late hour, I have found the right remedy for all my spiritual ills and for the horrors they cause to me. Now oh Lord, you must understand the seriousness of this issue—and it is that if I sink in the sea of sorrows due to my own sins, the world would only blame you and laugh at you because I have now taken the shelter of a buoy of your holy name which should not let me drown in the ocean of miseries and sufferings. So your entire reputation would be ruined and you yourself would be subjected to scorn and ridicule all over the world if you don't pay attention to me and let me suffer, be ware!] (4).

Oh Lord Sri Ram (*rāma*)! You are surely fully aware of the potential powers and the astounding influence, of the immensity of the fame, renown and glory of your divine and holy name (*nāmakō pratāpa jāniyata nīkē āpa*). [Surely it is well known to you that countless many creatures have found their liberation and deliverance relying solely on the mystical liberating powers of your holy name.]

As for me, the creator has not destined any other good in my fate except that I would take the shelter and refuge of your holy name (*mōkō gati dūsarī na bidhi nirama'ī*). [And I consider it the best boon that the creator could grant me in any case.]

Oh Lord, my countless evil deeds and endless misdemeanours are indeed sufficient to displease and annoy you and make you tremendously bitter (*khījhibē lāyaka karataba kōṭi kōṭi kaṭu*), but howbeit it is my blatant stubbornness, my audacity and shamelessness with which I approach you pleading for mercy and grace (relying on the strength of your holy name and my unwavering faith in it, as well as my faith in you and in your merciful nature, my devotion and love for you) that must be enough to greatly amuse you and make you feel mellowed at my pitiful condition (*rījhibē lāyaka tulasīkī nilaja'ī*)⁵.

[⁵I hope you will show mercy and compassion on me though I am so mean and base that I have no hesitation in talking so bluntly and boldly with you, have the temerity to face you with all my blemishes and faults, and have the audacity to flaunt my vices as if they were my qualifications making me eligible for receiving your grace and kindness! How incogruously blatant it is of me! But oh Lord, it is not the way it looks, for I have the greatest of respect and devotion for you. I just told you

about my sins because I do not want to hide anything from you. At the same time, I ought to bring to your notice one good and meritorious thing that stands to my credit in the ledger of my life—and it is that I repeat your holy name. Is it not sufficient an act to nullify all my misdeeds and sins? So you must show mercy upon me on this single count.

To wit, when you see my report card it is sure you retract in horror, and that is why you seem to be indifferent to my plight. But when I still persist and do not stop pleading with you, citing only one good thing that I can claim to be my merit—i.e. that I chant your holy name, then surely you must be feeling amused at my audacity of holding this banner in which I proclaim that I chant your name and therefore I have a right to claim redemption from you irrespective of the huge bundle of negativities that I carry on my shoulders. But Lord, this is the truth and the factual situation that you cannot deny: I do chant your holy name, and you are bound to take complete care of all those who even utter your name once.

So this would make you smile at my cleverness and my ruse at finding such an easy way into the haloed portals of your heavenly realm where great souls who are wise, self-realised and enlightened live after having made so many strenuous efforts to reach there.] (5).

[Note—In this verse, Tulsidas highlights the glory and spiritual value of the holy name of Lord Ram. He emphasises the point that if one has taken refuge in the holy name of Lord Ram then no matter if he has no other thing to his credit for ensuring his spiritual welfare, this ‘name’ is sufficient by all means. Even Lord Ram would be virtually compelled to free a sinful person from the negative consequences of his sins and provide him liberation and deliverance if this person has taken shelter in the holy name of the Lord.]

Lord Śrī Rāma is the most benevolent, munificent & gracious Lord

(253)

राम! राखिये सरन, राखि आये सब दिन ।
 बिदित त्रिलोक तिहुँ काल न दयालु दूजो,
 आरत—प्रनत—पाल को है प्रभु बिन? ।।1।।
 लाले पाले, पोषे तोषे आलसी—अभागी—अघी,
 नाथ! पै अनाथनिसों भये न उरिन ।
 स्वामी समरथ ऐसो, हौं तिहारो जैसो—तैसो
 काल—चाल हेरि होति हिये घनी घिन ।।2।।
 खीझि—रीझि, बिहँसि—अनख, क्यों हूँ एक बार
 ‘तुलसी तू मेरो’, बलि, कहियत किन?
 जाहिं सूल निरमूल, होहिं सुख अनुकूल,
 महाराज राम! रावरी सौं तेहि छिन ।।3।।

(253)

rāma! rākhiyē sarana, rākhi āyē saba dina.
 bidita trilōka tihum̐ kāla na dayālu dūjō,
 ārata-pranata-pāla kō hai prabhu bina?. 1.
 lālē pālē, pōṣē tōṣē ālasī-abhāgī-aghī,
 nātha! pai anāthanisōm bhayē na urina.
 svāmī samaratha aisō, haum̐ tihārō jaisō-taisō
 kāla-cāla hēri hōti hiyē ghanī ghina. 2.
 khījhi-rījhi, biham̐si-anakha, kyōm̐ hūm̐ ēka bāra
 'tulasī tū mērō', bali, kahiya kina?
 jāhim̐ sūla niramūla, hōhim̐ sukha anukūla,
 mahārāja rāma! rāvarī saum̐ tēhi china. 3.

Verse no. 253—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! Keep me as a refugee in your holy feet (rākhiyē sarana) because you have always been keeping in your shelter the ones like me every day (rākhi āyē saba dina).

Indeed, everyone knows the fact that there is no one as benevolent and munificent like you in all the three worlds (subterranean, terrestrial and heavenly) and the three eras or periods time (past, present, future) (bidita trilōka tihum̐ kāla na dayālu dūjō).

Oh Lord! Who else is like you when it comes to giving selfless protection and assurance of safety to those who are distressed and pitiable, and have come to surrender before your holy feet as your refugees (ārata-pranata-pāla kō hai prabhu bina)? (1).

The lazy, indolent, slothful and lithargic, the unfortunate and hapless, the stupid, vagrant, sinful, evil, vile and unrighteous ones (ālasī-abhāgī-aghī)—all have been brought-up, fed, taken care of, sustained, and kept happy and delighted by none else but you (for who else would have bothered about such worthless creatures) (lālē pālē, pōṣē tōṣē).

Oh Lord (nātha)! In spite of being so exceedingly magnanimous and liberally benevolent towards these worthless fellows, you always remained indebted to them and never felt freed from your obligations to them (pai anāthanisōm bhayē na urina)¹.

[¹To wit, such is your gracious nature that though you had done so much for them and even went out of your way to shower them with gifts that none of them ever deserved, you always felt that you could do more for them. They were a virtual burden upon your shoulder for they were good for nothing, but you felt obliged towards them because these creatures had indirectly honoured you by taking refuge with you and being accepted by you, for now they had proved without doubt to the world at large that you are the best, the most gracious and the most merciful Lord anywhere in this creation.]

It's such a great thing to have a Lord who is as noble, able, worthy and honourable as you are indeed (svāmī samaratha aisō)!

But oh Lord, though I feel that I am unworthy for you who are so great and majestic, but still I am one of yours no matter what sort of person I am, for I have no other Lord to whom I owe my allegiance or to whom I am obliged in any manner whatsoever except you (haum̐ tihārō jaisō-taisō)².

[²To wit, I adore and worship and pay my obeisance to only one Lord, and it is Lord Ram. Though my sins and misdeeds are so enormous that on the face of it I am unworthy to be called a servant, a follower or a devotee of Lord Ram, but nonetheless it cannot be denied that I have no other patron Lord except Lord Ram. And Lord, I am proud of claiming you as my only Lord God.]

Seeing the cunning manners and crooked deeds of Kaliyug, my heart is revolting and overcome with fear (for I am scared that this wicked fellow would do some mischief to divert my mind away from you and your holy feet, and get it hooked to the nasty temptations of this gross material world instead) (kāla-cāla hēri hōti hiyē ghanī ghina) (2).

I earnestly and beseechingly submit before you and invoke your gracious and merciful nature to request you (bali) that no harm would come to you if you would assuage my feeling of helplessness and help me to overcome my consternation and fears (as outlined herein above in this verse) by saying at least for once—“Tulsidas, you are mine”! So, why don’t you say it for once atleast (kyōm hūm’ ēka bāra ‘tulasī tū mērō’, kahiya kina)³.

If you say these comforting words to me in any manner whatsoever, even grudgingly and angrily (just to get rid of me and my nagging at you) or gladly and willingly (as a sign that you are pleased with me) (khījhi-rījhi), with a cheerful smile on your face or with a scowl implying reluctance (bihamśi-anakha)—verily and truly indeed and without gainsay, oh my Great Lord Ram (mahārāja rāma), then it is certain that right at that fortunate and auspicious moment (rāvarī saum tēhi china) all my miseries and misfortunes would be eliminated from their roots (jāhiṁ sūla niramūla), and instead, all joys and happiness would be mine even without my asking for them (hōhiṁ sukha anukūla).

[¹A similar idea is expressed earlier in verse no. 250, stanza no. 4 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’.] (3).

Lord Śrī Rāma’s Holy Name

(254)

राम! रावरो नाम मेरो मातु-पितु है।
 सुजन-सनेही, गुरु-साहिब, सखा-सुहृद,
 राम-नाम प्रेम-पन अबिचल बितु है।।1।।
 सतकोटि चरित अपार दधिनिधि मथि
 लियो काढ़ि बामदेव नाम-घृतु है।
 नामको भरोसो-बल चारिहू फलको फल,
 सुमिरिये छाड़ि छल, भलो कृतु है।।2।।
 स्वारथ-साधक, परमारथ-दायक नाम,
 राम-नाम सारिखो न और हितु है।
 तुलसी सुभाव कही, साँचिये परैगी सही,
 सीतानाथ-नाम नित चितहू को चितु है।।3।।

(254)

rāma! rāvarō nāma mērō mātu-pitu hai.
 sujana-sanēhī, guru-sāhiba, sakhā-suhr̥da,
 rāma-nāma prēma-pana abicala bitu hai. 1.
 satakōṭi carita apāra dadhinidhi mathi
 liyō kāḍhi bāmadēva nāma-ghṛtu hai.
 nāmakō bharōsō-bala cārihū phalakō phala,
 sumiriyē chāḍi chala, bhalō kṛtu hai. 2.
 svāratha-sādhaka, paramāratha-dāyaka nāma,
 rāma-nāma sārīkhō na aura hitu hai.
 tulasī subhāva kahī, sām̐ciyē paraigī sahi,
 sītānātha-nāma nita citahū kō citu hai. 3.

Verse no. 254—Oh Lord Sri Ram! (rāma!) Your Majesty's (rāvarō) holy name is my only parent (father and mother—nāma mērō mātu-pitu hai), my only kith, kin and other dear relations (sujana-sanēhī), my only revered teacher (Guru—guru), my master and lord (sāhiba), my friend and companion (sakhā), and my selfless well-wisher and benefactor (suhr̥da).

I say in all sooth and without any gainsay that the eternal and abiding affection, love and devotion that I have in your holy name, and to which I am wholeheartedly committed (rāma-nāma prēma-pana), is my only lasting wealth and sustainable treasure (abicala bitu hai) (that cannot be robbed from me!) (1).

The fact is that Lord Shiva had churned the curd-like ocean of measureless dimensions consisting of 100 Crores (i.e. hundreds of thousands) of your (Sri Ram's) divine stories that describe your countless virtuous acts, your excellent fame and glories (satakōṭi carita apāra dadhinidhi mathi), and as a fruit of this churning he had extracted clarified butter in the form of 'Ram's Holy Name' (liyō kāḍhi bāmadēva nāma-ghṛtu hai)¹.

The strength and support (both mental and emotional; both temporal and spiritual) that Lord Ram's holy name gives to a creature are astounding, and the Lord's holy name is exceedingly powerful and robust in every respect (nāmakō bharōsō-bala).

To wit, relying on Lord Ram's holy name and deriving support and strength from it is the best spiritual effort a creature can make, for it is the best thing to rely upon for one's own good. Verily, it is like a single best fruit that is borne on a tree consisting of the other four noble rewards that one usually gets by being righteous and doing meritorious deeds in life (cārihū phalakō phala)².

Therefore, one should constantly remember it (Sri Ram's holy name) with honesty and dedication after discarding all types of deceit, crookedness, pretensions, cunning, trickery and deception (sumiriyē chāḍi chala)³. [This is because the Lord does not like trickery and crookedness in his devotee's heart. If the devotee is not sincere and then he pretends to chant the holy name of Lord Ram, no benefit would accrue to him, and when he suffers in spite of saying the Lord's holy name he would blame the Lord instead of acknowledging his own fault.]

This is the best spiritual effort or exercise that a person can undertake (bhalō kṛtu hai) for his own welfare.

[¹There are countless instances in the epic Book known as “Ram Charit Manas” written by Goswami Tulsidas where the importance and glory of Lord Ram’s holy name and his divine story are highlighted. Some of these instances are the following:-- (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line nos. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-14 that precede Doha no. 32; (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 46; (b) Uttar Kand, (iv) Doha no. 124 ka; (v) Doha no. 126; (vi) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 129.

²The four traditional great rewards for being righteous and doing meritorious deeds in life are the following—(a) ‘Artha’ (prosperity and material well-being), ‘Dharma’ (acquisition of fame for being the virtues of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct etc.), ‘Kaam’ (fulfilment of all desires), and ‘Moksha’ (emancipation, salvation and one-ness with the supreme Lord).

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 44.] (2).

[In Gita, Lord Krishna had declared that consistency and perseverance with remembering and constant chanting of the Lord's holy name is yet another form of manifestation of the Lord himself—Gita 10/25.]

Oh Lord, your name can help achieve all worldly desires (“svāratha-sādhaka”; i.e. help serve self-interest related to existence in this gross material world) as well as bestow emancipation and salvation (paramāratha-dāyaka). [To wit, the Lord’s holy name takes care of both the temporal and the spiritual welfare of the creature.]

Forsooth and without gainsay indeed, there is nothing more beneficial, more considerate, more favourably inclined and more gracious towards a creature and his well-being than Lord Sri Ram's holy name (rāma-nāma sārīkhō na aura hitu hai).

Tulsidas makes this truthful statement about Lord Ram’s nature and temperament (tulasī subhāva kahī) after verifying its authenticity, and establishing its veracity and effectiveness based on his own experience (sāmñiyē paraigī sahī). [To wit, he makes this assertion boldly, authoritatively, honestly and truthfully (as a matter of fact, without any deceit, pretension and deception, or any kind of vested interest in saying so, as it his personal experience and he can vouch for its authenticity and truth.)]

The holy name of Sita's Lord Sri Ram (sītānātha-nāma) should be the real focus of concentration of one’s mind and sub-conscious (nita citahū kō citu hai)⁴.

[⁴When the mind and the sub-conscious are under the proper and wise control of the driver in the form of Sri Ram's holy name, there will be no chance of their going astray and move about like an aimless vagrant—colliding with so many bitter feelings and sorrowful experiences, and ending weary with frustration, disillusionment, disgust and agitation. Sri Ram's holy name, at the driver's seat, will judiciously, expertly and efficiently manoeuvre the vehicle towards its destination—and it is to give peace, tranquility, supreme bliss, contentedness, equanimity, equitability, uniformity, stability, forbearance etc. to the creature.] (3).

Lord Śrī Rāma’s Holy Name

(255)

राम! रावरो नाम साधु-सुरतरु है।
 सुमिरे त्रिबिध घाम हरत, पूरत काम,
 सकल सुकृत सरसिजको सरु है ॥1॥
 लाभहूको लाभ, सुखहुको सुख, सरबस,
 पतित-पावन, डरहूको डरु है।
 नीचेहूको ऊँचेहूको, रंकहूको रावहूको
 सुलभ, सुखद आपनो-सो घरु है ॥2॥
 वेद हू, पुरान हू, पुरारि हू पुकारि कह्यो,
 नाम-प्रेम चारिफलहूको फरु है।
 ऐसे राम-नाम सों न प्रीति, न प्रतीति मन,
 मेरे जान, जानिबो सोई नर खरु है ॥3॥
 नाम-सो न मातु-पितु, मीत-हित, बंधु-गुरु,
 साहिब, सुधी, सुसील, सुधाकरु है।
 नामसों निबाह नेहु, दीनको दयालु! देहु,
 दासतुलसीको, बलि; बड़ो बरु है ॥4॥

(255)

rāma! rāvarō nāma sādhu-surataru hai.
 sumirē tribidha ghāma harata, pūrata kāma,
 sakala sukr̥ta sarasijakō saru hai. 1.
 lābhahūkō lābha, sukhahūkō sukha, sarabasa,
 patita-pāvana, ḍarahūkō ḍaru hai.
 nīcēhūkō ūm̐cēhūkō, raṅkahūkō rāvahūkō
 sulabha, sukhada āpanō-sō gharu hai. 2.
 vēda hū, purāna hū, purāri hū pukāri kahyō,
 nāma-prēma cāriphalahūkō pharu hai.
 aisē rāma-nāma sōm̐ na prīti, na pratīti mana,
 mērē jāna, jānibō sō'ī nara kharu hai. 3.
 nāma-sō na mātu-pitu, mīta-hita, bandhu-guru,
 sāhiba, sudhī, susīla, sudhākaru hai.
 nāmasōm̐ nibāha nēhu, dīnakō dayālu! dēhu,
 dāsatusīkō, bali; baṛō baru hai. 4.

Verse no. 255—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! For Sadhus (i.e. those who have a pious and pure heart) your majesty's holy name is akin to a Kalpa Tree (rāvarō nāma sādhu-surataru hai) because as soon as it is remembered all the three types of legendary tormentors¹ that burn and horrify a person in this world are removed (sumirē tribidha ghāma harata).

Not only that, it is able to fulfil all the wishes of the person who remembers this holy name and makes him fully contented (pūrata kāma).

Indeed, the Lord's holy name is like a pond that is full of lotus flowers representing all the excellent qualities and virtues that are meritorious, righteousness, good and noble (sakala sukr̥ta sarasijakō saru hai).

[¹The three legendary tormentors are the following: Daihik—sufferings of the body; Bhautik—suffering related to worldly objects; and Daivik—suffering caused by angry Gods and stars. Refer also to verse no. 251, stanza no. 1 herein above in this Book.] (1).

The Lord's holy and divine name is like a personified form of all the great benefits and gains and auspicious rewards that one can expect to get (in life by doing meritorious deeds and being righteous) (*lābhahūkō lābha*).

Likewise, it is the essence of happiness and comfort as it provides extreme solace and succour to the tormented soul (*sukhahūkō sukha*).

In brief, it is one single source that grants everything that one would expect in this world (*sarabasa*)².

[²To wit, for saintly persons and those who are enlightened, there is nothing bigger and more important than Lord Ram's holy name as it gives them whatever they desire. The saints and devotees of the Lord have no greater benefit, no greater source of comfort, no solace or succour and no wealth that is more important and valuable than Lord Sri Ram's holy name.]

It is the purifier of those who are impure (such as sinners and unrighteous persons—“*patita-pāvana*”); it instills fear in the heart of the Fear itself (*ḍarahūkō ḍaru hai*)³.

[³To wit, Lord Ram's holy name is so potent and powerful that it not only decimates the sins of the sinners but also frees them from the horrifying consequences of their sins.]

It is easily accessible by all and meant for all—whether they be high or low in stature in this world, whether they are kings or paupers. Everyone can chant Lord Sri Ram's name and benefit from its holy vibrations (*nīcēhūkō ūm̐cēhūkō, raṅkahūkō rāvahūkō sulabha*)⁴.

[⁴This statement has a special relevance in the context of prevalent practice of disallowing some people from entering into temples or chanting Mantras and the holy name of the Lord, and even from reading the scriptures. Since every soul that resides inside the body of a living being is the same and a fraction of the Supreme Soul that is universal by nature, such practices are unjustified, below human dignity, abhorable and illogical. No one has the right to shut the door of God on anyone's face. Hence, Tulsidas alludes to this practice without directly denouncing it when he says that even the biggest of sinners, out-castes, lowly and even those who are castracised by the society have access to the Lord and his holy name, that Lord lives in their heart, and he purifies them. Three cheers for Tulsidas, to say so!]

It provides happiness and comfort to all and is as cosy and comfortable as one's own little home (*sukhada āpanō-sō gharu hai*)⁵.

[⁵A person finds immense joy, happiness, freedom, satisfaction and security in his own home, whereas when he stays with others, he feels discomfort and unease. That little space which one calls one's home provides the same freedom of spirit that one finds in the lap of the Lord—because the Lord is the most loving parent of all living beings.] (2).

The Vedas, the Purans and Lord Shiva have loudly and repeatedly proclaimed that having love, affection and endearment for Lord Sri Ram's holy name is the actual reward that one gets when one accesses the so-called four fruits⁶ of one's meritorious

deeds in life (vēda hū, purāna hū, purāri hū pukāri kahyō, nāma-prēma cāriphalahūkō pharu hai).

[⁶The four fruits of noble deeds are said to be the following: Artha—meaning financial well-being; Dharma—meaning acclaim for being noble and righteous; Kaam—meaning fulfilment of all desires; and Moksha—meaning attaining salvation and emancipation.]

If a person does not have in his heart, love, affection, faith and belief in such a glorious name of Lord Sri Ram (aisē rāma-nāma sōm na prīti, na pratīti mana), then in my (Tulsidas') view, he should be regarded as nothing better than a donkey (mērē jāna, jānibō sōī nara kharu hai). [He shall become a beast of burden, carrying the burden of miseries and torments for all times to come, without any sight of redemption. He shall suffer interminably due to his own foolishness, delusions and arrogance.] (3).

One's father and mother, friend and well-wisher, brother and teacher, master and lord—none of them can compare themselves with Lord Sri Ram's holy name (nāma-sō na mātu-pitu, mīta-hita, bandhu-guru).

It is like a wise Lord who is extremely courteous and polite, and it is like the soothing balm of the rays of the moon (sāhiba, sudhī, susīla, sudhākaru hai)⁷.

[⁷To wit, as soon as it is remembered, it accepts the caller, eliminates his torments of all kinds, dispels all his fears just like a caring Lord and Master would do for his servant or dependant, and it soothes the agitated person's nerves just like the rays of the moon does. Further, the name of Lord Ram is better than the two benefactors cited here, i.e. one's benevolent Lord and the soothing Moon, because the solace and succour that the name provides is permanent, of a high quality, and eternal in nature. It gives spiritual bliss, beatitude and felicity that neither the Moon nor the worldly Lord can ever give.]

Oh merciful and kind Lord, have mercy on me (dīnakō dayālu)! I most humbly submit before you and request you to grant me a boon by which I would be able to have steady and everlasting love, faith and devotion in your holy name (nāmasōm nibāha nēhu dēhu).

Verily indeed, this humble Tulsidas asserts that Lord Ram's holy name is his greatest of strength and asset that sustains him (dāsatusīkō, bali; barō baru hai) (4).

What more can I say?

(256)

कहे बिनु रह्यो न परत, कहे राम! रस न रहत ।
 तुमसे सुसाहिबकी ओट जन खोटो-खरो
 कालकी, करमकी कुसाँसति सहत ॥१॥
 करत बिचार सार पैयत न कहँ कछु,
 सकल बड़ाई सब कहाँ ते लहत?
 नाथकी महिमा सुनि, समुझि आपनी ओर,

हेरि हारि कै हहरि हृदय दहत ।।2।।
 सखा न, सुसेवक न, सुतिय न, प्रभु आप,
 माय—बाप तुही साँचो तुलसी कहत ।
 मेरी तौ थोरी है, सुधरैगी बिगरियौ, बलि,
 राम! रावरी सौं, रही रावरी चहत ।।3।।

(256)

kahē binu rahyō na parata, kahē rāma! rasa na rahata.
 tumasē susāhibakī ōṭa jana khōṭō-kharō
 kālakī, karamakī kusāmśati sahata. 1.
 karata bicāra sāra paiyata na kahūṁ kachu,
 sakala baṛā'ī saba kahām tē lahata?
 nāthakī mahimā suni, samujhi āpanī ōra,
 hēri hāri kai hahari hṛdaya dahata. 2.
 sakhā na, susēvaka na, sutiya na, prabhu āpa,
 māya-bāpa tuhī sāmčō tulasī kahata.
 mēri tau thōri hai, sudharaigī bigariyau, bali,
 rāma! rāvarī saum, rahī rāvarī cahata. 3.

Verse no. 256—Oh Lord Sri Ram! I am finding it difficult to keep mum, and speaking aloud before the Lord will neither look good nor serve any purpose (kahē binu rahyō na parata, kahē rāma! rasa na rahata)¹.

[¹Refer also to verse no. 262 in this context.]

(Why? Because if I speak aloud it would seem I am complaining against you, undermining your greatness and majesty, and attempting to tarnish your image and reputation. But the fact is this—)

The thing is, inspite of having found protection of and shelter under a most able, most proficient, almighty, omnipotent and supremely adept Lord like you, this servant of yours—whether he is good or bad, whether he is meritorious or not (tumasē susāhibakī ōṭa jana khōṭō-kharō)—is still suffering immensely from intolerable agonies, miseries and sorrows that are inflicted upon me by the present wicked time known as ‘Kaal’, by my own wicked deeds, and by the wicked company that I am forced to keep (kālakī, karamakī kusāmśati sahata)².

[²To wit, it is said that if a person surrenders before Lord Ram and takes refuge in his holy feet, repeats the Lord’s holy name and seeks only the Lord’s grace, then certainly and surely all his worries, sorrows, fears and consternations are immediately dispelled. But I am sorry to say that in my case I find nothing of the sort actually happening. I continue to suffer and be miserable inspite of my surrendering before you, taking refuge in your holy feet, repeating your holy name, and seeking help from no one else but you. I wonder what has gone wrong.] (1).

[When I think of the precedents of Valmiki, Nishad, Jatau, Sabari, Ajamil, etc.², I feel dismayed and remorseful. Why? Here’s the answer—] When I ponder over my own fate and compare it with that of others who were as wretched, sinful, evil, lowly and bereft of all spiritual merit as me, or even far worse than me, so much so that none of

them were worthy of being granted any sort of reward or honour, I can't find an answer for my continued sufferings and why I am not being relieved. The more I think, the more I become perplexed. (karata bicāra sāra paiyata na kahūṁ kachu).

I begin to wonder at the mystery as to how and why and from where had these souls been able to find such high honour, respect, dignity and an exalted stature in life, as well as of getting the reward of liberation and deliverance from the miseries and horrors of transmigration and life in this mortal world without, making any effort for it (sakala barāṭī saba kahāmṁ tē lahata)³.

[³I have read and heard that they got this great fortune because all of them were accepted and blessed by you, oh Lord Ram. I have also read and heard that you regarded it as your duty to redeem their souls and provide them your protection and refuge because they were all suffering and were miserable due to their ill-fate and sinfulness, and you have a reputation of giving solace and succour to all those who are in a dire strait and have come to seek refuge and shelter with you.]

What aggravates my confoundedness and perplexity is the fact that when I hear of this majestic reputation of yours and the way you had been kind, gracious and merciful towards other like me in the past, and compare it with my personal case and how I am suffering interminably, I feel utterly confused and bewildered because I can't find an answer to the question 'why I am being neglected by you'. The two situations, i.e. the way I am being neglected by you and left to suffer, and the way you had granted your mercy to others like me and liberated all of them from their sufferings, don't add up together, they simply don't tally and seem contrary to each other (nāthakī mahimā suni, samujhi āpanī ōra).

So therefore, when I can't find any plausible answers for my predicament and sufferings inspite of my best of efforts and after having submitted myself before a Lord of Sri Ram's fame and glory, I feel extremely exasperated and dejected; I feel very dismayed, distraught, remorseful and regretful at my fate; I lose all hope. This causes immense heart-burn to me (hēri hāri kai hahari hrdaya dahata)⁴.

[⁴When I become overwhelmed with sorrows and feel hurt that I am being discriminated against by you, that you are indifferent to my plight and neglecting me, that though I am totally devoted to you and had been faithfully repeating your name yet I am being subjected to such indifference and lack of interest at your hands, I do certainly feel annoyed and angry. And Lord, when a man is emotionally upset and baffled beyond measure, his heart weeps, he loses control over his mind and thought, and this is the reason why I appear to be accusing you of negligence in my case. But oh Lord, really it is not my intention at all. I love you like no one ever did. It's like the case of a child throwing tantrums before his father when it feels neglected!

There are countless verses in this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where it is narrated that Lord Ram had provided redemption to even the most sinful, lowly and fallen creatures. Some of these references as examples are the following: verse nos. 152, 160, 164, 166, 191, 193, 215, 241 which all convey more or less the same idea.

Please see a note appended at the end of this verse which throws more light on the idea and the philosophy expressed here.] (2).

[Though I don't want to annoy you with my constant nagging, but who else can I speak to and unburden the burden of my heart, because—] I have no friend, no trust-

worthy servant, nor a chaste wife or any Lord or Master to whom I can disclose the agony of my heart (*sakhā na, susēvaka na, sutiya na, prabhu āpa*). For in all sooth and without gainsay, oh Lord, Tulsidas is speaking the truth that you are my only kith and kin, that you are my only parent (*māya-bāpa tuhī sām̐cō tulasī kahata*).

My individual case is of a minor importance and of little consequence, and it can be handled very easily by you. Be sure Lord that I am not too worried about whether my destiny would be made good or it would be ruined (*mērī tau thōrī hai*)⁵.

[⁵To wit, though I am sinful and evil, but given the sort of people who have benefited from your merciful nature, my case is but only miniscule as compared to them for I am sure that all my sins added up together won't match those of others whom you had blessed in the past. So I am not too worried about myself, and you would not have to exert yourself unduly trying to neutralise the consequences of my sins.]

But there are more serious issues at stake. I submit most humbly and honestly before your majesty that I am more worried about your own glorious reputation, about the sancity and validity of your own vows and words. I want to make sure that you are able to uphold and stand true to your own words, that your majestic glory and immaculate reputation are not adversely affected due to me, and that I may not become a cause for any concern for you (*sudharaigī bigariyau, bali, rāma! rāvarī saur̐, rahī rāvarī cahata*)⁶.

[⁶To wit, oh Lord, you have repeatedly affirmed that if one comes to take shelter with you, then no matter how grievous are his misdeeds and sins, you would redeem his soul and provide him with your protection nevertheless; that all such persons would be eligible for receiving the boon of liberation and deliverance as well as enjoyment of the fruits of happiness and peace at your hands.

So if anything wrong happens to me, if I continue to suffer and tormented by my sins, then your reputation, your good fame and your holy name would be tarnished forever. Your renowned practice of being benevolent, munificent, beneficent, benignant and magnanimous towards the lowly, the downtrodden, the humble and poverty-stricken might get dented if the word spreads in this world that you have neglected a person by the name of Tulsidas.

Hence, oh Lord, I want to caution you, that it would be in your own interest to take good care of me, for otherwise you would be the greater sufferer in the long run!

It is indeed fascinating to note that Tulsidas has no fears whatever when he virtually puts the Lord on notice, and when he politely and lovingly admonishes the Lord for taking so much time for redeeming him. This is because Tulsidas is very confident of himself, of the steadfastness and truthfulness of his love, devotion and commitment towards his beloved Lord Ram on the one hand, and of the Lord's own love for his devotees on the other hand that he knows that the Lord would never ever get angry with him and would never take umbrage at his emotional outbursts.

What a remarkably high level of devotion, conviction and faith do we indeed find in Tulsidas! He is sure that his Lord will never, ever, wreak vengeance upon him for openly accusing the Lord of bias against him; he is confident that the Lord cannot become wrathful and malicious on him for his audacity and temerity to speak so blatantly in front of him.

Frankly, can anyone of us gather so much courage to threaten our Lords without the fear of reprisal? See also verse no. 241, stanza no. 5 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where Tulsidas has expressed a similar idea as done in this current verse.] (3).

[Note—This verse is remarkable in the sense that it gives the impression that Lord Ram is actually neglecting his ardent devotee Tulsidas. The reality is that it is wrong to deduce this. Lord Ram is exceptionally magnanimous, benevolent, gracious, kind, merciful and compassionate, and so to think that he is treating Tulsidas roughly is absolutely out of the question.

Actually, Tulsidas has send us a strong but subtle spiritual message that is in a veiled form through this and other such verses of Vinai Patrika where apparently it seems that he is showing his dismay and sorrow that Lord Ram is neglecting him and not paying heed to his prayers for redemption. He wishes to tell us that we must be patient and persistent in our spiritual endeavours and not lose hope in any way whatsoever in a situation where we perceive, though erroneously, that our prayers are not being answered or even heard by the Lord God. The Lord has indeed and for sure heard us, but then there are two things that give the impression that we are being overlooked by him:

First, the Lord God wishes to see our sincerity and steadfastness, he wishes to judge us whether or not we will continue to have devotion for him, continue to respect and love him, continue in our desire to mend our bad and evil ways and become good and righteous, or are we just praying to him as a short-term goal to get over the horrors and sufferings that bare their teeth us at, and as soon as the Lord does grant us freedom to us from our current fears and sufferings, we would go back to our bad old ways and plunge head-on in sins and vices as was our wont till we were forced to seek protection from the Lord.

Second, the Lord has to take into account the magnitude of our past sins and misdeeds and the quantum of punishment that accrue to us due to these. His seeming delay in granting us relief is a means to let us have a sample of the bitter punishment that we deserve for all our evils and vices, and to warn us not to repeat them, for if the Lord decides to withdraw his protective umbrella because we are habitual offenders then we would be roasted in the hellish fire of sufferings and torments once again. And this second time there would be no relief forthcoming.

The relationship between Lord Ram and Tulsidas is like that between a doting father and his beloved infant child who has no one else to take care of him. The father remains busy in handling the existential affairs in the world, he has his hands full and lots of things to do, but definitely he keeps a watch on his infant child from the corners of his eyes, to make sure that he is alright. The child on the other hand wants this and that, his mind is fidgety and child-like, sometimes he feels hungry and other times he wants that toy, suddenly he breaks the toy and cries for a new one, now he runs before a butterfly and after some time his attention is caught by the musician on the street, and so on. The father keeps on going routinely with his daily grind, and only when he thinks proper and fit would he answer to the constant nagging of the child. But does that mean that the father neglects his beloved child? Does it mean the father would forget the time when the child needs feeding? Would the father turn away if the child hurts himself and blood oozes out of his wound? Or, would the father allow the child to come in the harm's way if he tries to run onto a street that is full of vehicles that may crush him?

Oh no, absolutely not! In these cases the father would throw away whatever he was doing and immediately lunge forward to lift the child in his arms and embrace him; the father may even slap the child angrily for doing so much mischief. But doesn't this mean that the attention of the father was always and consistently fixed on the child's welfare and well-being, that the father loves the child more than anything in this world, that the father's attention was only superficially directed to the external affairs of the world and his duties towards it, but internally he was extremely worried and concerned about his only child? The fact is that the father was not being indifferent towards or neglecting the child any whit.

The same situation applies here—between Lord Ram and Tulsidas, and from a broader perspective between the Lord and all of us, all of his devotees! What is needed is steadiness of faith, devotion, commitment, sincerity and truthfulness. And besides these, persistence and patience are also needed. Just like case where a chronic disease cannot be cured overnight by the best of doctors giving the best of medicines, for the disease would take its own time to free the sick person who is suffering from its horrors, spiritual maladies too take time to be remedied.

So with this understanding, let us have another way of reading Tulsidas' mind as expressed in this verse as follows: "When I ponder over thoughtfully, nowhere can I find the solution to the mystery as to how come the wretched, sinful and evil ones such as Valmiki, Nishad, Jatau, Sabari, Ajamil etc. had found honour, an exalted stature and reverence when they weren't worthy of it? Then I am told that it was due to your grace and mercy upon them that made them so fortunate. So, when I hear and ponder over this great reputation of yours and about your merciful and gracious nature, and then look at the present state of my affairs, I lose hope and courage, and the heart burns due to distress and uncertainty. This is because I can't find an answer to the vexed question as to why the same merciful Lord who had been so welcoming and warm to others is neglecting me. Am I so supremely sinful and vile that I am beyond redemption, and hence the Lord turns away his sight from me? Alas! Now, what will happen to me?

I have heard that you have accepted hordes of lowly and sinful ones, and made them pure, worthy of respect and salvation. Being of such benevolent and graceful character, I wonder what has gone wrong in my case. This obviously causes heart-burn and frustration to me, and I start babbling incoherently as if hallucinating.

Anyone in my situation would be heart-broken and dejected, and this is the reason why I feel so agitated and incoherent in my utterances and thoughts that I seem to cast aspersions on your majesty's dignity and reputation when I say that you are being biased against me, that you are neglecting me, that you don't fulfil your own declaration that you will not let anyone who comes to you with some hope to go back empty-handed, and so on and so forth. So please Lord, forgive me.

I shudder at the very thought that you are indifferent to me and my welfare. I wince at this gloomy thought which I am certain are only like the ghosts and phantoms seen in the dark, for I am sure there is no pith and substance in my worries and fears. I know that you are exemplarily merciful and kind, and it is only my suffering that has made me so edgy and gloomy. Indeed, I am so sorry to even let the thought of Lord Ram not caring me enter my mind; woe to me for this evil thought.

How come that on the one hand I call myself your devotee, and then keep on worrying about my fate, thinking erroneously that it is doomed! It can't be that.

Perhaps my sufferings have made me so restless that I wish to break the queue and go straight to you over the head of others. I do not have the patience to wait for my chance. Why don't I understand that once I have come to stand before you, I can't go empty-handed no matter how tremendous my sins are and how busy you may be. So oh merciful Lord, please forgive and condone me.”]

The glory of Lord Śrī Rāma, the Friend of the Downtrodden

(257)

दीनबन्धु! दूरि किये दीनको न दूसरी सरन ।
 आपको भले हैं सब, आपने को कोऊ कहूँ,
 सबको भलो है राम! रावरो चरन ॥1॥
 पाहन, पसु, पतंग, कोल, भील, निसिचर
 काँच ते कृपानिधान किये सुबरन ।
 दंडक-पुहुमि पाय परसि पुनीत भई,
 उकठे बिटप लागे फूलन-फरन ॥2॥
 पतित-पावन नाम बाम हू दाहिनो, देव!
 दुनी न दुसह-दुख-दूषन-दरन ।
 सीलसिंधु! तोसों ऊँची-नीचियौ कहत सोभा,
 तोसो तुही तुलसीको आरति-हरन ॥3॥

(257)

dīnabandhu! dūri kiyē dīnakō na dūsarī sarana.
 āpakō bhalē hair̥ṁ saba, āpanē kō kō'ū kahūṁ,
 sabakō bhalō hai rāma! rāvarō carana. 1.
 pāhana, pasu, pataṅga, kōla, bhīla, nisicara
 kām̐ca tē kṛpānidhāna kiyē subarana.
 daṇḍaka-puhumi pāya parasi punīta bha'ī,
 ukathē biṭapa lāgē phūlana-pharana. 2.
 patita-pāvana nāma bāma hū dāhinō, dēva!
 dunī na dusaha-dukha-dūṣana-darana.
 sīlasindhu! tōsōṁ ūm̐cī-nīciyau kahata sōbhā,
 tōsō tuhī tulasikō ārati-harana. 3.

Verse no. 257—Oh the Friend of those who are distressed, wretched, lowly, downtrodden, humble, distressed and poor (dīnabandhu)! If you (are so stern that you would decide to) remove (or send away) this humble wretch of a person like me from the shelter that he has taken in your holy feet, then I would not find refuge anywhere else again (dūri kiyē dīnakō na dūsarī sarana), because almost every

master or lord in this world is concerned about his own self-interest and services done to him first and foremost (*āpakō bhalē haim saba*), but those who can be selflessly benevolent, benignant and beneficent towards others, such as their humble servants (followers, subordinates, dependants) are very rare to be found (*āpanē kō kō'ū kahūṃ*¹).

Oh Lord Sri Ram (*rāma*)! I say truthfully that your majesty's holy feet (*rāvarō carana*) are the only ones that do good to all, that think of the welfare and well-being of all, irrespective of who they are and what their worth is (*sabakō bhalō hai*)¹.

[¹To wit, Lord Ram gives refuge to one and all who have come to seek shelter with him—for in all sooth and without gainsay, the Lord is greatest benefactor for all refuge-seekers in this world. No one is turned away from his door.

There is not a single master or lord who would spare much thought for those who are of no use to them. But oh merciful Lord Ram, it is only you who is famed for being a selfless Lord who showers his grace upon even those unfortunate persons who are worthless as far as being of any service to you is concerned, but who have nevertheless come to seek refuge at your holy feet, regarding you as their only Lord and Patron.] (1).

The stone (*“pāhana”*--Ahilya), the animals (*“pasu”*--monkeys, bears), the bird (*“pataṅga”*--Jatau, Kagbhhusund), the Kol-Bhil (*“kōla, bhīla”*--i.e. the tribals such as Guha-Nishad), the demon (*“nisicara”*--Vibhishan) etc.—they were all transformed into gold from glass (i.e., they were all worthless creatures, but your grace had made them honoured, respected, famed and exalted in this world)² (*kām̐ca tē krpānidhāna kiyē subarana*).

The soil of 'Dandak Van' (the forest by the name of Dandak) became holy and pure at the touch of your holy feet (*daṇḍaka-puhumi pāya parasi punīta bhaṭi*), and its withered and uprooted trees bloomed and blossomed once again (i.e., they bore fruits and flowers once again) (*ukathē biṭapa lāgē phūlana-pharana*)³.

[²The story of Ahilya is narrated in verse no. 43, stanza no. 3 of this Book. Similarly, the story of Sugriv the monkey is narrated in verse no. 134, stanza no. 5; of Jatau the bird in verse no. 57, stanza no. 3; of Kaagbhhusund in verse no. 78, stanza no. 5; of Guha-Nishad in verse no. 134, stanza no. 4; of Vibhishan the demon in verse no. 78, stanza no. 5 this Book.

³Dandakaranya/Dandakaaranya Forest/Dandak Van—This story is narrated at the end of this verse marked as 3*.] (2).

Oh revered Lord God (*dēva*)! Your name—which is the purifier of the impure and is the protector of the lowly, downtrodden, out-castes, castracised and evil ones—is graceful and benevolent even towards those who are opposed to you, who are hostile to you (*patita-pāvana nāma bāma hū dāhinō*)⁴.

[⁴To wit, even those who remember you with enmity, discord, malice, hatred, ill-will and hostility are liberated from this world and blessed with emancipation and salvation. Their soul find peace and tranquillity. There are many examples where this has happened. Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, his brother Kumbhakaran, the monkey king Vaali, the demons Khar-Dushan, Marich etc. who were commanders of

the demon army—all of them found liberation and deliverance inspite of being opposed to you and remembering you with enmity in their hearts.

Since they remembered you one way or the other and had uttered your name while talking about you, albeit with animosity in their hearts and in connection with the war they were waging against you, but your holy and divine name is so gracious that it overlooked the reason why these sinful souls were pronouncing your name, and preferred to give them the same spiritual reward that great sages and saints got by uttering your name with reverence! Is is not a mystery worth contemplating upon, and a wonder worth greatly wondering and pondering about?]

There is no one except you in this world who can destroy intolerable sorrows, miseries and tribulations as well as the hordes of sins, vices and evils that proliferate in this world (*dunī na dusaha-dukha-dūṣana-darana*).

You are an ocean of tolerance, forbearance, politeness, courteousness and other noble virtues (which are such grand characters that instill fearlessness and a sense of confidence in those who come with grievances of all kinds to seek redressal from you, because they are assured that they won't be scorned or scoffed at, harassed, punished or admonished for their impertinence and their audacity to wail and lament before you) (*silasindhu*)—so it is good and worthwhile, for at least there is no harm, to speak to you about pleasant or unpleasant things without hesitation of any kind (*tōsōm ūmčī-nīciyau kahata sōbhā*)⁵.

[⁵To wit, oh gracious Lord Ram, I am so assured of your kind and welcoming nature that I have no fear to tell you all about my sufferings. I have no good tidings to convey to you; all I have are wailings, lamentations and woeful pleadings about my fractured fate, with of course an urgent prayer to you to provide succour to me from my miseries and sufferings that seem interminable and intolerable.]

What more can I say except that for me you are the only one of your kind, and no one is any match for you, for you are the only one who can remove the sorrows, agonies and miseries of Tulsidas (*tōsō tuhī tulasikō āratī-harana*) (3).

[Note—3*The Dandakaaranya or the Dandak forest was the most uninhabitable and fierce part of the forest. It was infested by demons and ogres as well as cruel wild animals. This forest was the area where Lord Ram had spent the major part of his forest exile, and it covers all the events as mentioned in the 'Aranya kand' of the epic Ramayana/Ram Charit Manas.

An interesting legend is associated with this forest. 'Dandak' was the youngest of the hundred princes who were the sons of king Ikshvaku after whom a dynasty was named in which later on Lord Ram was born. Dandak was a stubborn and stupid son, so the father, king Ikshvaku, gave him the region of the kingdom lying between two great mountain ranges—the Vindhya and the Shaiwal—to rule from there. This region acquired the name 'Dandak' after this son. Another reason is that the word 'Danda' means punishment. The king was so upset with this son of his that he assigned to him a forest region as a punishment for his nature. Dandak was virtually sent to exile in a forest with due honour, far away so that he would not interfere with the administration of the rest of the kingdom and cause nuisance.

He built and established a beautiful city named Madhumanta there, and made Sukraacharya, the Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) of the demon race, as his royal Guru. He ruled over this kingdom in peace for a long time

Besides being utterly stupid, Dandak was of a promiscuous nature. Once he had gone to his Guru's hermitage in the Hindu month of Chaitra. It was a very pleasant occasion, and overcome with lust he had molested Arjaa, the daughter of his own Guru Shukraachaarya. The Guru became furious and cursed him, saying—'let Indra, the king of Gods, shower hot-as-fire dirt and sand on your kingdom and scorch it to ashes as far as a hundred Yojans (800 miles). This will continue for seven days, and during this time everything here, moving and unmoving, will be reduced to ashes.'

Then he advised his daughter Arjaa, 'Live here on the shores of the huge lake measuring some one Yojan (8 miles). Some time later, sages came to live here to do severe Tapa (penance and austerity) because it was serene and uninhabited. This forest came to be known as 'Dandakaaranya'—the forest that was reduced to such a state because of this curse as a punishment.' Refer: Valmiki Ramayana, 7/49/81.

As a result of this curse, the entire kingdom was decimated and reduced to an un-inhabitable and barren stretch of land. Since Dandak was the cause of this, the entire land was named after him to remind and warn the coming generation to be careful about what they do and how they behave. Since it was left alone from being overcrowded, sages, hermits and ascetics made it their home. Being thus blessed by their august presence, some of the curse was neutralized and it got the name 'Janasthaan'—a place that was inhabited by Gyanis or learned and realised souls. According to modern historians, the area of modern India that falls around Nasik, a city along the western seaboard of the country, was the area called Danda-kaaranya in ancient times.

When Lord Ram came here on the advice of sage Agastya, it was freed of its horrible curse and regained its beauty and magnificence. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 16-17 that precede Doha no. 13.

It was here that Lord Ram made friends with Jatayu, the vulture king who was to later lay down his life trying to save Sita from being kidnapped by Ravana. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 13, and later on Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29 to Doha no. 32.

It was in this forest that Lord Ram had killed the ferocious demons Khar, Dushan, Trishira and their 14 thousand companions. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18, to Doha no. 20. Refer also to Vinai Patrika, verse no. 257, line nos. 6-7 which say that the forest of Dandak which was barren with burnt out trees and full of thorns was converted into a verdant forest full of flower and fruit bearing trees as soon as Lord Ram put his holy feet on its floor.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 14 it is narrated how the Dandak forest was transformed—"Ever since Lord Ram came to live in this forest, the sages, hermits and seers who lived there became happy and all their torments ended. The hills, the forest, the rivers, the ponds and lakes in this forest began to look charming and beautiful; they were delightful to behold. Their magnificence and beauty changed and appeared to improve every passing day; each new day made them appear more beautiful and enthralling than the previous day. The hordes and flocks of animals and birds that populated this forest lived happily and joyously, without any worry in the world. The forest reverberated with the humming of the black bee. Even the king of serpents, Lord Sheshnath, is unable to describe the pleasant environs of the forest where Lord Ram, the Lord of the universe, himself resides."

Tulsidas' "Dohawali" mentions this forest and refers to this incident in its Doha no. 172. Let us see what it says—

दंडक बन पावन करन चरन सरोज प्रभाउ ।
ऊसर जामहिं खल तरहिं होइ रंक ते राउ ॥

“Dandak Bana Paawan Karan Charan Saroj Prabhaau/
Usar Jaamahi Khala Tarahi Hoi Ranka Te Raau//”

“By the grace of the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram—which had converted the inhabitable Dandak forest from being cursed to being one that was blessed and holy (i.e. from being harsh, inhospitable and riddled with fierce blood seeking demons and cruel animals, into a verdant green forest rich in pleasant flora and fauna)—even infertile land can yield crops, miscreants and rascals can be liberated (i.e. provided freedom from the burden of their accumulated sins and their horrible consequences), and a pauper (i.e. a penniless destitute) can become a king.”

This particular Doha appears in Tulsidas' book called Ram Agya Prashnawali, as verse no. 3/1/1 in it.]

Tulasidās' humility and his polite request to Lord Śrī Rāma

(258)

जानि पहिचानि मैं बिसारे हौं कृपानिधान!
एतो मान ढीठ हौं उलटि देत खोरि हौं ।
करत जतन जासों जोरिबे को जोगीजन,
तासों क्योंहूँ जुरी, सो अभागो बैठो तोरि हौं ॥1॥
मोसे दोस—कोसको भुवन—कोस दूसरो न,
आपनी समुझि सूझि आयो टकटोरि हौं ।
गाड़ी के स्वानकी नाई, माया मोहकी बड़ाई
छिनहिं तजत, छिन भजत बहोरि हौं ॥2॥
बड़ो साई—द्रोही न बराबरी मेरीको कोऊ,
नाथकी सपथ किये कहत करोरि हौं ।
दूरि कीजै द्वारतें लबार लालची प्रपंची,
सुधा—सो सलिल सूकरी ज्यों गहडोरिहौं ॥3॥
राखिये नीके सुधारि, नीचको डारिये मारि,
दुहूँ ओरकी बिचारि, अब न निहोरिहौं ।
तुलसी कही है साँची रेख बार बार खाँची,
ढील किये नाम—महिमाकी नाव बोरिहौं ॥4॥

(258)

jāni pahicāni mair̥m bisārē haum̐ kṛpānidhāna!
ētō māna dhiṭṭha haum̐ ulaṭi dēta khōri haum̐.
karata jatana jāsōm̐ jōribē kō jōgijana,

tāsōm kyōnhū jurī, sō abhāgō baiṭhō tōri hauṁ. 1.
 mōsē dōsa-kōsakō bhuvana-kōsa dūsarō na,
 āpanī samujhi sūjhi āyō ṭakaṭōri hauṁ.
 gārī kē svānakī nā'īm, māyā mōhakī baṛā'ī
 chinahīm tajata, china bhajata bahōri hauṁ. 2.
 baṛō sā'īm-drōhī na barābarī mērīkō kō'ū,
 nāthakī sapatha kiyē kahata karōri hauṁ.
 dūri kījai dvāratēm labāra lālaci prapañcī,
 sudhā-sō salila sūkarī jyōm gahaḍōrihauṁ. 3.
 rākhiyē nīkē sudhāri, nīcakō ḍāriyē māri,
 duhūm'ōrakī bicāri, aba na nihōrihauṁ.
 tulasī kahī hai sām'cī rēkha bāra bāra khām'cī,
 ḍhīla kiyē nāma-mahimākī nāva bōrihauṁ. 4.

Verse no. 258—[This verse continues from the last stanza of the previous verse no. 257.]

Oh Lord who is an abode of grace, mercy, compassion and kindness (“krpānidhāna”—i.e. Lord Sri Ram)! I have willingly forgotten you and about your gracious nature though I had been acquainted with you and had known about you (jāni pahicāni mairīm bisārē hauṁ). [To wit, I had heard and read about you in the scriptures which have repeatedly sung about your divine form, about your merciful nature, and about your glories. But I have forgotten all about it. Do you know why?]

I have become so arrogant and stubborn due to my haughtiness, ego and vanity that (instead of being obliged to you) that I accuse you (for all my miseries, lamenting that in spite of your reputation of being merciful towards the distressed you are not paying proper attention to me, that your fame and glories are therefore dubious) (ētō māna ḍhīṭha hauṁ ulaṭi dēta khōri hauṁ). [To wit, in my stupidity and ignorance, I forget that all my miseries have their genesis in my distancing myself from you, in my forgetting to seek your shelter to seek protection from my horrors, but instead of regretting it and finding ways to mend my ruined fate by surrendering before you and pleading to you to forgive me for my mistakes and wrongdoings, I continue to blame you for all my torments and troubles.]

Great Yogis (ascetics and those sages who strive to attain the un-attainable Lord through the difficult path of Yoga—meditation, concentration, austerities, penances etc.) try various method and paths to establish an affectionate relationship with you (karata jatana jāsōm jōribē kō jōgījana)—but I am so stupid, unfortunate and wretched that I broke what little acquaintance and relationship that was somehow established between you and me (by forgetting you and not feeling obliged to you for all the good you have done for me, and instead blaming you for all my miseries and sufferings that are my own creations) (tāsōm kyōnhū jurī, sō abhāgō baiṭhō tōri hauṁ)! (1).

A treasury of sins, evils, vices and unrighteousness like mine (or me) is not to be found anywhere in the 14 Lokas (i.e. in any corner of this creation) (mōsē dōsa-kōsakō bhuvana-kōsa dūsarō na)—I have tried my best to search for the likes of me but have failed to locate anyone who would be as sinful and evil as my own self anywhere in the world (āpanī samujhi sūjhi āyō ṭakaṭōri hauṁ).

Even as a dog chasing a vehicle (e.g., a car, a chariot) runs behind it for sometime and then strays away here and there at other times, only to rejoin the chase once again (*gārī kē svānakī nā'īm*), so do I also abandon my attachment to charms and attractions caused by the deluding effects of Moha and Maya* in this material world for some time (*māyā mōhakī barā'ī*), but unfortunately sooner or later I return to my bad old ways and become engrossed in the same thing that I had turned away from a while ago (*chinahim tajata, china bhajata bahōri hauṁ*)¹.

[¹To wit, for some time I behave like a wise and enlightened man by realising that the many charms and attractions of this material world of sense objects are merely a delusion, and to be involved in them or getting attached to them is surely getting entangled in a web of miseries and sufferings from where it is impossible to withdraw. But woefully this wisdom is shortlived, for sooner rather than later I forget all about this thought and plunge head on in getting entangled in the same web which I had so feared a while ago.

*The word “Moha” means worldly longings; attractions and attachments with sense objects of the world. The word “Maya” means delusions and ignorance about the reality that cause this Moha.] (2).

[In this stanza, Tulsidas has challenged Lord Ram to throw him out of his door because he is very sinful, but the Lord must remember what negative consequences this would have on his own glorious reputation. It's a wonderful verse that highlights Tulsidas' faith and devotion for Lord Ram—for he knows that the Lord would never ever think of doing away with him no matter what the provocation is. Tulsidas has politely admonished his beloved Lord Ram for delaying in showing mercy to him. It is like an affectionate form of nagging and pleading that a child does while asking his doting and loving father for special favours. The child may sometimes even accuse the father of being harsh towards him, for not heeding to his requests instantly, but that is only superficial anger for the child knows in his heart that no one loves him more than his father! He also knows that in case his father scolds him or does show him the door in exasperation, then he would repent soon and would rush to pick up and embrace his son tearfully, carress him affectionately, and give him more toys and sweets, even kiss more than he had done in the recent past just to repent for his harshness towards the son.]

I swear by you millions of times (i.e., I say most truthfully and honestly, and with you as witness for what I say—“*nāthakī sapatha kiyē kahata karōri hauṁ*”) that there is no one compared to me who has greater ill-will, malice, animosity and discord with his own Lord, Master and Patron (*barō sā'īm-drōhī na barābarī mērīkō kō'ū*).

[By saying that he swears in the name of the Lord, Tulsidas simply means that he is not telling a lie.]

Therefore I dare you to remove me from the front of your doorway if you think that I am a great liar, an imposter, an extremely greedy person and a crook—(*dūri kijai dvāratēm labāra lālaci prapañcī*), for otherwise I would spoil the clean water like a swine does by wallowing in it (*sudhā-sō salila sūkarī jyōm gahaḍōrihauṁ*)².

[²To wit, if you do not pay heed to my prayers because you think that I am too sinful to be eligible to receive any relief from you, and you therefore force me to go away, then I will behave most sinfully and commit all types of evil, unrighteous and unscrupulous deeds in my frustration, and in spite of my declaration that I am your devotee and follower, and therefore it is expected that I must behave most righteously

and properly in a way that behoves of a person close to your majesty, I will act in a way that would bring you a bad name. Say, why would I do it? It would be to force your hands and compel you to listen to me and my prayers in order to safeguard your own reputation and glory. For if you don't listen, the world will laugh at you and say—"Look, Lord Ram has done this to Tulsidas!"] (3).

Hence, either you must completely redeem me (by mending my evil ways, by helping me to change my waywardness, recklessness and pervert nature, my unrighteousness, my unscrupulous ways and my misdemeanours) and keep me in the shelter of your holy feet (*rākhiyē nikē sudhāri*), or else kill me to get rid of the treasury of sins and evil that I represent (to protect your fame, name and honour—like you had done in the case of sinful demons) (*nīcakō ḍāriyē māri*)!

All right, its enough! You decide for yourself what to do out of these two options that are before you (*duhūṁ' ōrakī bicāri*). I will not beg or plead before you any more (*aba na nihōrihaum*). This fellow Tulsidas repeatedly affirms what he said herein above, and it is like a line marked on stone which can't be erased (*tulasī kahī hai sām'cī rēkha bāra bāra khām'cī*).

In brief, oh Lord, if you delay in providing solace and succour to me then will sink the boat symbolised by your glorious name, your immaculate reputation and your majestic fame (*ḍhīla kiyē nāma-mahimākī nāva bōrihaum*)³.

[³To wit, I am fed-up wailing and pleading and lamenting before you, seeking nothing else but only your grace and mercy. And you have nonchalantly ignored me. So now I will behave sinfully even while squatting before your majesty's doorway. Let the world know that I am being neglected by such a great Lord as Sri Ram inspite of my humbly pleading for so long. No harm would come to me, for all know that I am sinful and miserable. But it is your grand reputation and majesty that would take a severe beating should something happens to me. The people will lose faith and belief in your name seeing my miserable, wretched and pitiable condition, and your apathy towards me. See also verse nos. 241/5, 256/3.

So oh Lord think over it and stop procrastinating while deciding to redeem me and my soul forthwith!] (4).

Invoking Lord Rāma's Benevolence & Munificence

(259)

रावरी सुधारी जो बिगारी बिगरैगी मेरी,
 कहौं, बलि, बेदकी न, लोक कहा कहैगो?
 प्रभुको उदास—भाउ, जनको पाप—प्रभाउ,
 दुहूँ भाँति दीनबन्धु! दीन दुख दहैगो ॥1॥
 मैं तो दियो छाती पबि, लयो कलिकाल दबि,
 साँसति सहत, परबस को न सहैगो?
 बाँकी बिरुदावली बनैगी पाले ही कृपालु!
 अंत मेरो हाल हेरि यौं न मन रहैगो ॥2॥
 करमी—धरमी साधु—सेवक, बिरत—रत,
 आपनी भलाई थल कहाँ कौन लहैगो?
 तेरे मुँह फेरे मोसे कायर—कपूत—कूर,

लटे लटपटेनि को कौन परिगहैगो? ।।3।।
 काल पाय फिरत दसा दयालु! सबहीकी,
 तोहि बिनु मोहि कबहुँ न कोऊ चहैगो।
 बचन—करम—हिये कहौ राम! सौँह किये,
 तुलसी पै नाथके निबाहेई निबहैगो ।।4।।

(259)

rāvarī sudhārī jō bigārī bigaraigī mērī,
 kahaur̥ṁ, bali, bēdakī na, lōka kahā kahaigō?
 prabhukō udāsa-bhā'u, janakō pāpa-prabhā'u,
 duhūṁṁ bhām̐ti dīnabandhu! dīna dukha dahaigō. 1.
 mair̥m tō diyō chātī pabi, layō kalikāla dabi,
 sām̐sati sahata, parabasa kō na sahaigō?
 bām̐kī birudāvalī banaigī pālē hī krpālu!
 anta mērō hāla hēri yaur̥m na mana rahaigō. 2.
 karamī-dharamī sādhu-sēvaka, birata-rata,
 āpanī bhalā'ī thala kahām̐ kauna lahaigō?
 tērē mum̐ha phērē mōsē kāyara-kapūta-kūra,
 laṭṭe laṭapaṭēni kō kauna parigahaigō?. 3.
 kāla pāya phirata dasā dayālu! sabahīkī,
 tōhi binu mōhi kabahūṁṁ na kō'ū cahaigō.
 bacana-karama-hiyē kahaur̥m rāma! saunha kiyē,
 tulasī pai nāthakē nibāhē'ī nibahaigō. 4.

Verse no. 259—[We have read upto now that Tulsidas repeatedly complains that it seems Lord Ram is not paying attention to his prayers to help him out of his miseries and torments. Tulsidas also wonders at so many places as to why this has happened that Lord Ram seemingly neglects him and is appears to indifferent to his sufferings, because the Lord is renowned for his exemplarily merciful and gracious nature, and therefore it is against his the character to let his devotee suffer and do nothing about it. So Tulsidas starts wondering and pondering at the plausible reasons for this situation to have developed. He comes to the conclusion that Lord Ram is a little annoyed and peeved at Tulsidas because though the Lord had tried his best to amend his fate and pull him back from falling in the precipice of misery and grief, Tulsidas somehow slips from the Lord's grip and goes back to square number one, wallowing in sufferings and miseries and keeping on lamenting and wailing endlessly.

So the Lord got frustrated and dismayed at Tulsidas' apparent stubbornness and his doomed fate which forces him to suffer inspite of the Lord's repeated attempts to salvage his destiny, and so the Lord gave up and decided to let Tulsidas face whatever is destined in his destiny though the Lord was very sad and sorry that this would actually happen. But what could the Lord do when all efforts to nullify Tulsidas' sins and counter the evil affects of his misdeed came to a naught because as soon as Tulsidas was freed from the horrifying consequences of his past he went back to his bad old ways again.

But Tulsidas was not a born sinner or doer of misdeeds. In fact, he was pious and holy soul who was so frustrated himself from the evil forces that surrounded him that he would grab the first opportunity that would come to him to free himself from

them. The very fact that he decided to seek shelter of Lord Ram proves that he was determined to find redemption for himself and have peace for his tormented self. So why would he willingly commit newer sins and do newer misdeeds to invite troubles for himself if Lord Ram had helped him to overcome the negative effects of his past misdemeanours repeatedly? Surely there must be something wrong somewhere down the line.

When Tulsidas started analysing the reasons for his precarious condition and why he had so annoyed Lord Ram that the Lord seems to turn a deaf ear to all his pleadings for mercy, he deduced that the root cause is ‘Kaliyug’, the present age in which Tulsidas lives. This Kaliyug is a highly wicked, cunning, pervert and sinful fellow, and it has got the better of Tulsidas. Kaliyug has pinned Tulsidas down, has caught him by the neck and strangulates him so stiffly that the poor fellow isn’t even able to breathe feely. So he is forced to do Kaliyug’s bidding, otherwise this rascal would make life hell for him so long as he lives. When a man is tortured by a cruel conqueror, he does the bidding of his captor not because he is loyal or faithful to the latter but to escape from more torture. So Tulsidas is forced to act in a way which Kaliyug wants him to. Perhaps this is the reason why Lord Ram is angry with Tulsidas—that the latter refuses to amend himself. What could he do when Kaliyug has stifled him and sits on his chest to pin him down. Lord Ram must understand this situation this Tulsidas is not at fault at all, for things are beyond his control. And therefore there is no reason why the Lord should be angry at him. This idea is the theme of stanza no. 2 of this present verse.

Thus, after having explained his case to Lord Ram, Tulsidas then goes on to ask the Lord to intervene and do whatever is expedient in the matter. He tells the Lord that if the latter still keeps mum and takes no action to free Tulsidas from the clutches of Kaliyug then it is the Lord who will suffer more than anyone—for the world would question the Lord’s ability to provide succour and solace to the distressed and miserable persons who have come seeking refuge with the Lord after having lost all hopes from all sides. Further, now it is also clear that the real culprit is Kaliyug and not Tulsidas’ own nature apparent evil nature that has resulted in the latter’s repeatedly failing to mend his ways and committing sins inspite of Lord Ram’s repeated warnings not to do so.

Tulsidas warns the Lord politely that not redeeming him, not providing him relief and succour from the sufferings inflicted upon him by the rascal Kaliyug, and continuing to neglect him and allowing him to remain Kaliyug’s prisoner, will surely send a wrong signal to Kaliyug because it would think that Lord Ram feels insecure before its overwhelming might, and that is why the Lord has decided keep his hands off Tulsidas so as not to offend Kaliyug as the latter is now the de-facto Master of Tulsidas, having put him in fetters and enslaved him for good.

Oh God! What would happen to the Lord’s great fame and glorious reputation if this message spreads in the world! So the Lord must be careful now and reconsider his attitude to this distressed fellow Tulsidas, if for nothing else than at least for the sake of safeguarding his own name, fame and reputation!]

Oh Lord! If I were able to undo whatever good your majesty may have done for me and my fate so far (*rāvarī sudhārī jō bigārī bigaraigī mērī*), then forget about what the Vedas would say for I am not talking about them (*kahaurṁ bēdakī na*), but just think of what this world would say (*lōka kahā kahaigō*)! I’ll sacrifice myself if what I say is wrong (*bali*)¹.

[¹Lord, if suppose you say that you had already done so much good for me and had ensured that all the bad effects of my past sins were eliminated, and therefore there should be no reason why I would suffer so much, and that you are surprised why I am indeed suffering. It would mean that surely I have undone all the good you had done for me; I was able to turn the wheel back against your wishes to provide succour and solace to me because I continue to wail and lament inspite of your saying that you had already mended my ill fate. This would imply that I am stronger than you because I was able to demolish the good fate you had so assiduously built for me. Just think, oh Lord, what implications this would have on your own reputation and fame. Won't it mean that whatever the scriptures have said about your being almighty and all-powerful is all wrong and falsehood. Even if you don't care about what is hidden inside the voluminous tomes of the Vedas and kept as a secret by them, just imagine the ridicule, scorn and scoff you would subject yourself to in the world. The world has held you in high esteem and had believed that once a creature's destiny has been taken care by you, the creature would be eternally happy and blissful. So why is this Tulsidas wailing and lamenting so sorely? Is Lord Ram not what the scriptures make him out to be?!]

Oh merciful and compassionate Lord who is a friend of the distressed and miserable creatures (*dīnabandhu*)! Your indifference towards me and the horrifying effects of my own huge baggage of sins (*prabhukō udāsa-bhā'u, janakō pāpa-prabhā'u*)—if these to join hands, then surely without any gainsay I would be roasted alive in pain and misery of the worst kind (*duhūṁ' bhāṁti! dīna dukha dahaigō*)².

[²To wit, perhaps you are so indifferent to me for the reason I stated herein above—because you think I am beyond redemption like a wicked child who has been so spoilt by his parent's love and pampering that the parent begins to neglect him. So you thought it better to keep quiet and turn a deaf ear to my wailing and lamenting as it is a waste of time and energy for you to try to do any good for me again, because I would once again undo whatever good you may do to me now.

It is a truth that I am indeed a great sinner, but if you, who are famous to be exceptionally merciful, kind, gracious and benevolent, too become stern and inimical to me—then say what would happen to me; I would be condemned to a very miserable and pitiable condition.] (1).

I have literally kept a Vajra on my chest because Kaliyug has been able to subdue me and pin me to the ground (*mairṁ tō diyō chātī pabi, layō kalikāla dabi*). Primarily, this is the cause of all my problems and ill-fate. Indeed, not only me but anyone who is dependent on others, or enslaved by others who are wicked and merciless, is bound to suffer interminably (*sāṁsati sahata, parabasa kō na sahaigō*)³.

[³To wit, I have turned my heart in to a stone and have emotionally readied myself to suffer from the consequences of my sins and my evil nature and deeds because I am too weak to offer any resistance to the might of Kaliyug, which stands for all the sins, evils and vices that are prevalent during the present age and time in which I live. I practically can't free myself from the clutches of Kaliyug because I am born in its dominion and have to live surrounded by a society that pays obeisance to and owes its allegiance to Kaliyug. In this situation you must understand that my suffering is not due to me undoing what good you have done for me, or due to me not obeying your orders, or my lack of devotion and faith in you, but it is because I am pinned down by Kaliyug and held in a strong shackle by it, forcing me to do its bidding because it has tightened its grip on my neck and put its entire weight on my

heart so much so that I am almost strangled to suffocation. So oh Lord, say what can I do? At least, you must understand my predicament.]

So oh merciful and compassionate Lord (kṛpālu)! You will have to keep in view your rarest-of-rare and great reputation, your merciful nature, your graceful character and your immaculate virtues to ensure that you give me protection and shelter irrespective of how bad or doomed I may be (bāṁkī birudāvalī banaigī pālē hī)⁴.

[⁴To wit, oh Lord, you have to keep in mind that I am not left high and dry, I am not left in the lurch, to suffer inspite of surrendering myself to you and pleading with utmost sincerity to you for providing me with solace and succour. Remember: nothing worse can happen to me for I am already doomed and wallowing in misery, but neglecting me would ruin your majestic reputation and demolish the lofty glories that the Vedas and other scriptures have so assiduously built for you.]

I am certain that you cannot remain indifferent for long to my plight and my sufferings, and in the end, sooner rather than later, you would surely and without doubt take pity on my condition and redeem me (anta mērō hāla hēri yaurṇ na mana rahaigō). [It is an absolute certainty.] (2).

Think oh Lord. People who are ‘Karma-Kandi’ (those who carry out elaborate Vedic rituals and sacraments), ‘Dharmatma’ (those who are righteous, scrupulous and follow the Vedic edicts), ‘Sadhu’ (saints, pure-hearted ones), ‘Sevaks’ (servants, devotees, followers, subordinates), ‘Virakta’ (renouncers, those detached from the sense objects and material charms of this mundane world) and ‘Vishai’ (those who are indulgent in pleasures of the sense organs and engrossed in the enjoyment of the objects of this mundane, temporal world) (karamī-dharamī sādhu-sēvaka, birata-rata)—all of them would find a suitable place or destiny for themselves somewhere depending on the deeds respectively done by them, is it not true (āpanī bhalāī thala kahām kauna lahaigō)⁵?

[⁵To wit, these people would reach their goals or attain the objectives that they have set for themselves because they are resourceful and are vigorously employing the necessary tools that are needed to attain success in their endeavours. The Karma Kandis follow the Vedas; the Dharmatmas follow the laws and rules set for righteous conduct and proper behaviour in one’s life; the Sadhus and Viraktas strictly follow the principles laid out for them in the scriptures by practicing austerities, self-control and other religious vows. So all of them get some kind of good reward for their efforts.]

But, where will creatures like me, who are coward, unworthy, sinful, evil, resourceless, most wretched, downtrodden and humble, go to find any kind of shelter and refuge for themselves (tērē mumṇha phērē mōsē kāyara-kapūta-kūra, laṭē laṭapaṭēni kō kauna parigahaigō)⁶?

[⁶No one will give them refuge, protection, shelter etc. anytime anywhere in this world, or even in the next life. They are unable or incapable themselves to do something constructive for their destiny. If at all they manage to do anything then it is only to ruin whatever good is still leftover in their destiny. Oh Lord Ram, say who will take care of such unfortunate creatures if even you turn away from them? Say, how horrible would their destiny be?] (3).

Oh merciful, compassionate, gracious, benevolent and munificent Lord (dayālu)! With the passage of time and when the opportune moment comes, everyone finds some or the other kind of favourable circumstance for himself at some point in his life

(kāla pāya phirata dasā sabahikī)—but excepting you, no one would ever be favourable or benignant towards me; no one would ever like me and condone me; no one would ever provide any kind of succour and solace to me; and I will have no destination for myself (tōhi binu mōhi kabahūm' na kō'ū cahaigō).

Oh Lord Ram (rāma)! I swear before you, and I want to impress upon you most truthfully and honestly, with all the abilities of my speech, my thoughts and me deeds that I have in my command (bacana-karama-hiyē kahauṁ saunha kiyē), that this Tulsidas can be sustained only by you (and no one else) (tulasī pai nāthakē nibāhē'ī nibahaigō) (4).

Tulasīdās' humility and his polite request to Lord Śrī Rāma

(260)

साहिब उदास भये दास खास खीस होत
मेरी कहा चली? हौं बजाय जाय रह्यो हौं ।
लोकमें न ठाउँ, परलोकको भरोसो कौन?
हौं तो, बलि जाउँ, रामनाम ही ते लह्यो हौं ।।1।।
करम, सुभाउ, काल, काम, कोह, लोभ, मोह
ग्राह अति गहनि गरीबी गाढ़े गह्यो हौं ।
छोरिबेको महाराज, बाँधिबेको कोटि भट,
पाहि प्रभु! पाहि, तिहुँ ताप-पाप दह्यो हौं ।।2।।
रीझि-बूझि सबकी प्रतीति-प्रीति एही द्वार,
दूधको जस्यो पियत फूँकि फूँकि मह्यो हौं
रटत-रटत लट्यो, जाति-पाँति-भाँति, घट्यो,
जूठनिको लालची चहाँ न दूध-नह्यो हौं ।।3।।
अनत चह्यो न भलो, सुपथ सुचाल चल्यो
नीके जिय जानि इहाँ भलो अनचह्यो हौं ।
तुलसी समुझि समुझायो मन बार बार,
अपनो सो नाथ हूँ सोँ कहि निरबह्यो हौं ।।4।।

(260)

sāhiba udāsa bhayē dāsa khāsa khīsa hōta
mērī kahā calī? hauṁ bajāya jāya rahyō hauṁ.
lōkamērṁ na ṭhā'um', paralōkakō bharōsō kauna?
hauṁ tō, bali jā'um', rāmanāma hī tē lahyō hauṁ. 1.
karama, subhā'u, kāla, kāma, kōha, lōbha, mōha
grāha ati gahani garībī gārḥē gahyō hauṁ.
chōribēkō mahārāja, bām'dhibēkō kōṭi bhaṭa,
pāhi prabhu! pāhi, tihum' tāpa-pāpa dahyō hauṁ. 2.
rījhi-būjhi sabakī pratīti-prīti ēhī dvāra,
dūdhakō jaraīō piyata phūm'ki phūm'ki mahyō hauṁ
raṭata-raṭata laṭyō, jāti-pām'ti-bhām'ti, ghaṭyō,

jūṭhanikō lālacī cahaurṁ na dūdha-nahyō haurṁ. 3.
 anata cahyō na bhalō, supatha sucāla calyō
 nīkē jiya jāni ihām̐ bhalō anacahyō haurṁ.
 tulasī samujhi samujhāyō mana bāra bāra,
 apanō sō nātha hū sōṁ kahi nirabahyō haurṁ. 4.

Verse no. 260—[As with all other prayers in this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’, the insightful advice given by Tulsidas in this verse is inspirational and full of wisdom if one were to read the hidden message contained in it.

Here in this verse, Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram to accept him as one of his faithful devotees, servants or followers, whatever way the Lord wishes to treat him. He tell his Lord—]

‘When any lord or master becomes indifferent, careless and apathetic towards (the welfare of) his servant or dependant, then no matter how favourite that servant or dependant may be or how diligently he may be serving his lord or master, his fate, his future and well-being become uncertain. This would cause a lot of heartburn for the servant or the dependant as he feels neglected and overlooked, feels very sad, despondent and distraught, and he has no one else to fall back upon in times of need (because his master or lord seems not to be interested in him, and therefore would take no interest in solving his problems and taking care of his welfare) (sāhiba udāsa bhayē dāsa khāsa khisa hōta).

If this situation can happen to a most favoured servant or dependant of any master or lord, then what to talk of me as my case is far worse and it is useless to talk about it (mērī kahā calī). [This is because, as far as I can see, my only Lord Sri Ram seems to have become indifferent to me as he does not pay any heed to my constant pleadings and prayers.]

Let me not hide anything; let me be forthcoming. I can beat a drum and declare that I am flowing down in the flood of sorrows and miseries with no succour and hope in sight (haurṁ bajāya jāya rahyō haurṁ). [This is apparently because Lord Ram, my only Lord, has neglected me and has become apathetic towards my plights. He does not seem to take pity on me.]

Woe and pity to me and my fate: both seem doomed for certain now. I am extremely distraught and overcome with gloomy forebodings. For when I have no certainty of anything in this world while I live, who can say what would happen to me in my afterlife (i.e. after my death) (lōkamērṁ na ṭhā’um̐, paralōkakō bharōsō kauna)?

Oh Lord (Sri Ram)! Have pity on me for I plead most affectionately and faithfully to you to say that I have literally sold myself at the hands of your holy name, and howsoever I am, I have surrendered myself to it (haurṁ tō, bali jā’um̐, rāmanāma hī tē lahyō haurṁ)¹!

[¹To wit oh Lord, for all practical purposes my individuality has now been merged with yours, and your glorious name has now become my surname and an identification, because since I chant your holy name constantly, the world openly says that I am your most faithful and loyal servant or follower or devotee, whatever way you look at it. So, neglecting me now and letting me suffer would not so much affect me as it would undermine the great fame, reputation and glory of your holy name, and by extension of your own majesty.

Tulsidas says that he has accepted Lord Ram as his only Lord and Redeemer, and repeats the Lord’s holy and divine name constantly so much so that wherever he

goes the people recognise him by this name of the Lord that he utters aloud. Now, this name of Lord Ram is not any ordinary name; it is a reputed mystical formula that the scriptures have unequivocally endorsed as being the best Mantra for one's spiritual welfare. This being the case, if Tulsidas' fate is doomed for whatever reason, the responsibility for it would fall squarely on Lord Ram's shoulder. So he politely asks the Lord to pay attention to him and provide solace and succour as well as salvation and emancipation to him, for if the Lord continues to neglect and adopt a nonchalant attitude towards Tulsidas then surely the Lord would be the greater loser—as his majestic glory and lofty reputation would come crushing down.] (1).

[Comparing the many shortcomings and negative traits he has, as well as the existential problems he faces in this world, as cruel crocodiles who have grabbed him and are slowly devouring him, Tulsidas pleads with his Lord Ram to show mercy to him by protecting him from this torture and ill fate.]

I have been caught in the jaws of huge crocodiles (*grāha*)² representing “*karama, subhā'u, kāla, kāma, kōha, lōbha, mōha*”³. [They are slowly and steadily devouring me.]

My condition is made all the worst because poverty and misfortune have clasped me viciously in their grip (*ati gahani garībī gārḥē gahyō haurṁ*). [Here, ‘poverty and misfortune’ refer to the lack of resources and means by which I can mend my fate and attain spiritual welfare. So this only aggravates my sufferings.]

Oh Great Lord and King of kings (*mahārāja*)! There are so many countless captors who show enthusiasm and willingness to hold me captive (deriving seductive pleasure in tormenting me and seeing me writhing in my sufferings) (*bāṁdhibēkō kōṭi bhaṭa*), but it is only you who can free me from all my shackles (and liberate me from all the horrors these captors are inflicting upon me) (*chōribēkō*).

Oh Lord, I fall down at your feet and beg before you repeatedly to protect me (*pāhi prabhu, pāhi*). I am being scorched and tormented from all the sides by the three types of heat (suffering, misery, agony, pain)⁴ caused by the negative effects of my sins and misdeeds (*tihum tāpa-pāpa dahyō haurṁ*).

[²Tulsidas has the uncanny ability to use words so craftly that a single word often means different things. Here, the word used in the text is “*grāha*”. It has two obvious meanings—one is a ‘crocodile’, and the other is ‘to grab or catch hold of’. In the context of what is being narrated in this verse, both the meanings fit in well. When a crocodile grabs a person it is almost impossible to free oneself. Likewise, when a person is caught in the snare of vices and evil traits listed here, it becomes well nigh impossible for him to break free from their clutches.

³*karama* = the bad effects of misdeeds done by a person.

subhā'u = one's bad and corrupt nature.

Kāla = the negative influences upon a person of bad times and circumstances which he can't avoid.

Kāma = passions, lust, desires etc. related to the sense objects of this material world as well as the desire for gratification of the natural urges of one's sense organs.

kōha = anger, wrathfulness, vengeance.

lōbha = greed, rapacity.

mōha = attachment to and infatuation with worldly things.

⁴The ‘three great Torments’ that scorch a creature like he was being burnt in a raging fire are the following: *Adhidaivik* = sufferings caused by gods and stars who are inimical; *Adhibhautik* = suffering caused by other creatures and factors associated

with life in this mortal world; and Adhyatmik = sufferings caused on account of lack of spiritual welfare.] (2).

Oh Lord! I have thought over the matter deeply and have applied my intelligence to come to the conclusion that all sorts of affectionate relationships that do exist in this world are due to your showing grace and affection for a person. If you become favourable on someone, then all others too show favour and affection to such a person (rījhi-būjhi sabakī).

So, whatever affection one gets in this world, whatever endearing relationships that one develops in this world, all have their origin at the doorstep of the Lord (pratīti-prīti ēhī dvāra)⁵.

[⁵To wit, if one gets respect from you, if one finds favour with you, if one is welcomed and honoured at your door, then the rest of the world too willingly shows respect and honour to such a person. The reason is that people closely monitor these developments and sees how one is treated by you. If a person finds favour with you then the world shows honour and respect to him; if he is neglected by you the world too neglects him. Do you know why? It is because the people are so cunning and selfish that they do not wish to show respect to a person with whom their King is not happy!]

Verily, I have had a bad experience of getting scalded by drinking too hot milk, and therefore I am so scared and apprehensive now that I blow at the buttermilk to ensure that it is not hot (dūdhakō jaraīō piyata phūmkī phūmkī mahyō haum̐)!

I repeatedly prayed to others (i.e. many gods and deities as well as able human beings) seeking solace and succour from them, and I have become weary of it now (raṭata-raṭata laṭyō). This begging and pleading has only made me fall in dignity and self-respect in society in every way. I have fallen from grace in the social hierarchy as well as in the esteem of my peers (jāti-pām̐ti-bhām̐ti, ghaṭyō).

So now I have become so apprehensive that I feel shy in approaching even you (Lord Ram), and since I have fallen from grace in the society and neglected by my peers I don't expect milk from you either (cahaum̐ na dūdha-nahyō haum̐). [I don't expect you to show a great honour to me or shower me with costly gifts and largesse.]

I may be greedy, but oh Lord it is not for some great reward from you, for I shall be contented if you would just give me crumbs of food leftover by you (jūṭhanikō lālaci)⁶.

[⁶This is a wonderful stanza that can be interpreted as follows:

If a man burns his tongue and throat by drinking too hot milk then he is so frightened that when offered a glass of cold buttermilk he would ensure that it is not hot, though knowing full well that buttermilk is always cool and can never be hot. Tulsidas means that he has tried all other means to find solace and succour for himself, he has even tried to please so many gods and deities by offering sacrifices and oblations to them, but nothing gave him spiritual happiness and peace that he so assiduously seeks. But the world began treating him with contempt and disdain as if he were a beggar, going from door to door seeking things. So he was neither here nor there—on the one hand he got nothing by asking gods and deities, and on the other hand he forfeited his right to self-respect and dignity in society because people started treating him as a good-for-nothing beggar and a poverty-stricken wretch who deserves nothing but contempt.

So at last he came to the door of Lord Ram when he heard that the Lord welcomes people like him. But unfortunately Tulsidas found that here too he is being

neglected. This utterly confounded him as Lord Ram's reputation was so excellent and majestic that it was just the opposite of what Tulsidas experienced. So naturally he was dismayed and downcast to the extreme level. He began to wonder that perhaps the Lord thinks that Tulsidas was turned away by others as there must be surely something seriously wrong with him; perhaps he is very greedy and his wants never end, so others whom he had approached earlier thought it prudent to wash their hands off him. Therefore, Lord Ram thought that if he shows even basic courtesy to Tulsidas then he would hook himself to the Lord like a leech does, and sooner or later get on the Lord's nerves! So it is better to shake him off right now.

In this context Tulsidas uses the metaphor of the hot milk and buttermilk. He means that since he has had a very bad experience with others when he had approached them for solace and succour, he is also scared of the same doomed fate at the door of Lord Ram, though of course he knows that the Lord is exceptionally merciful, kind, graceful and benevolent unlike any other lord or master he had approached earlier. The Lord is the best benefactor and friend of all who are distressed and in misery of any kind.

So Tulsidas is extremely cautious in pleading with Lord Ram and expressing his desires. He outrightly tells the Lord that he does not want 'milk' which stands for the good things or rewards in this world. He has already burnt himself seeking this 'milk'. So what does he want from the Lord? Nothing of any worth. He would be contented if the Lord grants him permission to just stay at his door and not shoo him away. Tulsidas says that he would survive by eating the crumbs of food that the Lord discards. It is such a clever ploy because the Lord would have no more excuse to tell Tulsidas that what he wants can't be granted to him. After all, food that is thrown away after a meal is of no use to the householder. But of course, Tulsidas knows the merciful and gracious nature of Lord Ram—he is sure that the Lord would not feel happy to eat a delicious meal himself and let someone sitting at his very door go hungry! And Lord Ram is not an ordinary Lord or Master, for he is a personified form of the Supreme Being himself. So even the 'crumbs of food' that Tulsidas would be fortunate to get from Lord Ram would be equivalent to the best of good fortunes one can ever hope to get in his life!

Indeed, a fantastic degree of devotion, faith and humility can be observed in these stanzas. It is a message for all of us who wish to surrender before the Lord and are eager to receive the Lord's grace—that if we are fortunate to receive even a tiny fraction of the Lord's huge treasury of grace and mercy then let us rejoice and be reassured that our day has been made, for this tiny bit of the Lord's grace and mercy upon us is enough to take care of all aspects of our spiritual well-being as well as help us obtain eternal peace and happiness. What more would anyone want from his Lord?] (3).

[Say, where else or in front of whom shall I go to plead my case and seek redemption from my sufferings?]

I do not wish to seek happiness and have my welfare by taking shelter and refuge anywhere else even if that journey is very comfortable and without hassles for me (*anata cahyō na bhalō, supatha sucāla calyō*).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, I am feeling very happy and comfortable in my heart while being at your holy feet despite of not receiving any respect and apparently being neglected by you (*nīkē jiya jāni ihām' bhalō anacahyō haum*).⁷

Tulsidas tells his Lord Sri Ram that he has finally come to the conclusion that his sustenance, his welfare and well-being in all and every respect lies only with Lord Ram, and nowhere else (*nātha hū sōm kahi nirabahyō haum*).

He has repeatedly assured his Mana (mind and heart) about it, and he repeats it to his Lord also that there is no better destiny for him than this (*tulasī samujhi samujhāyō mana bāra bāra, apanō sō*).

[⁷Let us elaborate on this prayerful submission of Tulsidas and see what he might have wished to add more to clarify his stand—“Oh dear Lord Ram! See, I am totally incompetent to do anything or take care of myself. I just wish to pass the remaining period of my life peacefully by lying quietly at your doorstep. This would at least give me peace of mind and assurance of something to put in my stomach, and of course a place to lie down without the fear of being chased away. I don’t have any destination where I can go. I am old and feeble by body, and my mind is totally confounded and I can’t think properly as it is clouded by fears of an uncertain future.

What harm will I do to you if I just lie down to sleep somewhere in the corner of your majesty’s palace? Rest assured that I will not be a cause of any nuisance to you in any manner whatsoever. I won’t even ask you for food, for I shall be contented with bits and pieces that are discarded by you after meals. So there is no burden on you on this account also.

I am not at all asking you to give me any sort of honour, gift or alms. I don’t want salvation and emancipation either. I don’t expect the world to give me fame or recognition for being associated with you. Therefore I will not bring any bad name to you or make you uncomfortable in any way. I will not be nagging at you for anything, and this is my word of honour. What I only want is that you allow me to stay with you, within your reach, so that I can at least see you daily and make a silent obeisance to you, bow my head to you, shed some odd tears in affection for you, and spend my days singing and humming your divine stories and praising your excellent glories to my heart’s content. You will find great joy in your own heart if this simple prayer of mine is accepted by you—for your heart would tell you that you have done a noble act by giving shelter to a distressed soul. It’s a hugely charitable act indeed to give peace and succour to a distressed person like me.

Just think Lord about what would happen if you force me out of your door! The world sings your glory as the only Lord who gives shelter to those who have no shelter; a Lord who is exceptionally benevolent, magnanimous, graceful, merciful, compassionate and kind who goes out of his way to help the needy and the distressed. This majestic and glorious reputation of yours would be irrevocably tarnished forever if you do not accept me and allow me to take shelter with you. Nothing worse would happen to me than what already is my fate; but your honour and dignity would take such a severe beating that you won’t be able to recover any time in future.

Hence, it is in your own interest to accept me and let me stay close to you.”]

(4).

Regret that the life has been spent in futility

(261)

मेरी न बनै बनाये मेरे कोटि कलप लौं

राम! रावरे बनाये बनै पल पाउ मैं।
 निपट सयाने हौ कृपानिधान कहा कहाँ?
 लिये बेर बदलि अमोल मनि आउ मैं॥1॥
 मानस मलीन, करतब कलिमल पीन
 जीह हू न जप्यो नाम, बक्यो आउ—बाउ मैं
 कुपथ कुचाल चल्यो, भयो न भूलिहू भलो,
 बाल—दसा हू न खेल्यो खेलत सुदाउ मैं॥2॥
 देखा—देखी दंभ तें कि संग तें भई भलाई,
 प्रकटि जनाई, कियो दुरित—दुराउ मैं।
 राग रोष—दोष/द्वेष पोषे, गोगन समेत मन,
 इनकी भगति कीन्ही इनही को भाउ मैं॥3॥
 आगिली—पाछिली, अबहूँ की अनुमान ही तें
 बूझियत गति, कछु कीन्हों तो न काउ मैं।
 जग कहै रामकी प्रतीति—प्रीति तुलसी हू,
 झूठे—साँचे आसरो साहब रघुराउ मैं॥4॥

(261)

mērī na banai banāyē mērē kōṭi kalapa laur̥ṁ
 rāma! rāvarē banāyē banai pala pā'u mair̥ṁ.
 nipaṭa sayānē hau kṛpānidhāna kahā kahaum̐?
 liyē bēra badali amōla mani ā'u mair̥ṁ. 1.
 mānasa malīna, karataba kalimala pīna
 jīha hū na japyō nāma, bakyō ā'u-bā'u mair̥ṁ
 kupatha kucāla calyō, bhayō na bhūlihū bhalō,
 bāla-dasā hū na khēlyō khēlata sudā'u mair̥ṁ. 2.
 dēkhā-dēkhī dambha tēm ki saṅga tēm bha'ī bhalā'ī,
 prakatī janā'ī, kiyō durita-durā'u mair̥ṁ.
 rāga rōṣa-dōṣa/dvēṣa pōṣē, gōgana samēta mana,
 inakī bhagati kīnhī inahī kō bhā'u mair̥ṁ. 3.
 āgilī-pāchilī, abahūm̐ kī anumāna hī tēm
 būjhiyata gati, kachu kīnhōm̐ tō na kā'u mair̥ṁ.
 jaga kahai rāmakī pratīti-prīti tulasī hū,
 jhūṭhē-sām̐cē āsarō sāhaba raghurā'u mair̥ṁ. 4.

Verse no. 261—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! My future prospects can never be bettered and I can never be redeemed even if I employ all my competence and all my resources by putting to the best use all the different methods that are available to me for this purpose, even if I try for millions of Kalpas (i.e. for a very long period of time) (mērī na banai banāyē mērē kōṭi kalapa laur̥ṁ)—but if your majesty (rāvarē) so wishes, it can be done in a quarter of a second (banāyē banai pala pā'u mair̥ṁ)¹.

[¹My prospects for obtaining emancipation and salvation, my chances of attaining liberation and deliverance from my miseries and sufferings, my chances of getting peace, happiness and bliss for myself are negligible if I rely on my own efforts or resources. But if Lord Ram so wishes, my future can be made in a fraction of a second without the least effort on my part.]

Oh Lord who is a treasury of mercy and kindness (krpānidhāna)! What should I say (kahā kahaum̐), for you are wise enough yourself to fully understand my predicament (nipaṭa sayānē hau)—I have so foolishly exchanged a priceless gem with a worthless berry (liyē bēra badali amōla mani ā'u maim̐)².

[²Here, the priceless 'gem' represents one's life which could have spent in a worthwhile way by devoting it to Lord God and doing meritorious things that are within a person's abilities to do so as to attain his spiritual goal of obtaining liberation and deliverance from his miseries and torments that are associated with life, and to attain emancipation and salvation that would have granted him eternal contentment, peace, happiness and bliss.

The worthless 'berry' represents attachments with the world and its sense objects that a person's sense organs lusted for, and which has so much entangled him in a web of miseries and grief that now he regrets exceedingly, but finds no way out of his predicaments.

Tulsidas says that he regrets that his life has been spent in vain by pursuing the world and foolishly trying to find happiness and comfort in it, thinking erroneously that he would achieve something worthwhile in this world. What he got was nothing but misery and grief. But by the time he became wiser about his error, time had slipped away, and now he has become old and feeble. At this late hour when death is looming on the horizon, he has been overcome by gloom. So he approaches his benevolent Lord Sri Ram to save him from a certain doom by granting his grace to this unfortunate fellow who has come to seek the Lord's mercy and shelter. Tulsidas exceedingly regrets and feels remorseful that he has wasted in vain his life pursuing worthless pleasures of this materialistic world instead of using it to move ahead in the path of salvation.] (1).

As a result of my follies, my mind became tainted and darkened (with all sorts of negativities and perversions) (mānasa malīna), while my evil deeds became all the more robust (i.e., they increased in intensity of wickedness, and the frequency of such misdeeds also increased exponentially) due to the evil influences of Kaliyug (the present corrupt age in which I live) upon me (karataba kalimala pīna)³.

[³Kaliyug is the present corrupt age in which I live. It's so overpowering that I could not help myself. This in turn resulted in my sins, vices, unrighteousness and unscrupulousness being increased day by day. All this and much more was due to the evil influence of Kaliyug which had so much deluded me that I just forgot what was in my interests. So what more wrong did I do?]

To worsen my situation, I did not even chant your holy name with my tongue (jīha hū na japyō nāma), and instead I used it to utter incoherent nonsense and worthless chatter (bakyō ā'u-bā'u maim̐).

Further, I had played dirty tricks and behaved deceitfully and most irresponsibly, all the while following the path that was crooked, unrighteous, unscrupulous and improper (kupatha kucāla calyō).

I had not done good to anyone even inadvertently (bhayō na bhūlihū bhalō).

Alas! Even during childhood, I never played righteously and honestly; I did not play those games that are considered good, and morally correct and righteous; I did not play any game that would be centered on the theme of love and devotion for Lord God (bāla-dasā hū na khēlyō khēlata sudā'u maim̐) (2).

Yes, if I had by-chance done anything good and meritorious that can be of any worth (*bha'ī bhalā'ī*), either by imitating others (such as pretending to be a devotee of the Lord and chanting his name to mimic other devotees) (*dēkhā-dēkhī dambha tēm*) or due to the beneficial effects of having some sort of contact with saints and pious souls (*ki saṅga tēm*)—then I had roamed about boasting of it and letting everyone know of such isolated good thing that I may have done (*prakaṭi janā'ī*), whereas I assiduously concealed all those sins, evil deeds and misdemeanours that I had indulged in willingly (*kiyō durita-durā'u mair̥m*). [To wit, if I happened to do something good and meritorious, I wanted everyone to know about it and praise me for my excellent character. But I hid all my sins and misdeeds, and did not want anyone to get a wind of them.]

I had always been sustaining and nourishing such evil forces as “*rāga rōṣa-dōṣa/dvēṣa pōṣē*”⁴ in my heart and mind (*mana*); I had always been a captive to them and the urges of my sense organs (*gōgana samēta mana*). I had always been devoted to them, and I had always loved them (*inakī bhagati kīnhī inahī kō bhā'u mair̥m*). [To wit, I had been under their magical spell like a charmed man. I adored them and spent my time and life trying to keep them in good humour.]

[⁴*rāga* = to have attachment and infatuation with the sense objects of the world as well as the sense organs of the body.

rōṣa = anger and wrathfulness.

dōṣa = faults and shortcomings of all varieties.

dvēṣa = having jealousy, ill-will, animosity and malice with others.

pōṣē = to sustain and nourish.] (3).

After giving due thought to my past, my present and my future prospects of which I can only make a guess (*āgilī-pāchilī, abahūṁ' kī anumāna hī tēm būjhiyata gati*), I have come to the conclusion that I have not done anything which can be called as ‘good’ or ‘meritorious’ (*kachu kīnhōm tō na kā'u mair̥m*).

But this world says, “Tulsidas has great faith and affection for Lord Sri Ram” (*jaga kahai rāmakī pratīti-prīti tulasī hū*), and I too have the greatest of faith and affection for you (*pratīti-prīti tulasī hū*).

Now, whether all this is true or false (*jhūṭhē-sām'cē*), oh your majesty and my gracious Lord (Sri Ram—“*raghurā'u*”), I have come to you full of hope, and I rely only upon you for my welfare and future⁵ (*āsarō sāhaba mair̥m*)⁵.

[⁵Listen Lord! Whether you like it or not, whether I was a sinful or a good man in the past, there are two facts that cannot be overlooked and must be considered by you now: one is that the world has been identifying me as a person who has great affection for Lord Ram, a person who is totally devoted to Lord Ram, and two, that I have come to you with high hopes of redemption and acceptance, with full devotion in my heart for you, and am full of faith as well in your merciful and gracious nature which is so famed in this world and the scriptures.

So therefore, you ought to be very careful and diligent in treating my petition for mercy and grace. Remember: Should any thing wrong happen to me, should I continue to suffer in my miseries and grief, should I not be redeemed and provided spiritual succour—then the whole edifice of your glory and majesty, your reputation and fame would crumble down like a pack of cards!

Please don't take me otherwise, for when a man is in utter dire straits, he loses his senses and his ability to talk politely and courteously. I am not a diplomat who would say bitter things couched in a sweet array of pleasant words. I say what comes

to my mind. And if you are the Lord who loves honesty and truthfulness, if you are the one who is omniscient and all-knowing, even of the thoughts that are in one's mind and emotions that are hidden in his heart—then you must appreciate my truthfulness and uprightness that I say what is inside my mind and heart, and not contriving words to suit my purpose. Therefore oh Lord, please accept my prayers and grant me your grace and blessings. I don't want anything more.] (4).

What one should ask for from Lord Rāma if given an opportunity

(262)

कह्यो न परत, बिनु कहे न रह्यो परत,
 बड़ो सुख कहत बड़े सों, बलि, दीनता ।
 प्रभुकी बड़ाई बड़ी, आपनी छोटाई छोटी,
 प्रभुकी पुनीतता, आपनी पाप-पीनता ।।1।।
 दुहू ओर समुझि सकुचि सहमत मन,
 सनमुख होत सुनि स्वामी-समीचीनता ।
 नाथ-गुनगाथ गाये, हाथ जोरि माथ नाये,
 नीचरु निवाजे प्रीति-रीतिकी प्रबीनता ।।2।।
 एही दरबार है गरब तें सरब-हानि,
 लाभ जोग-छेमको गरीबी-मिसकीनता
 मोटो दसकंध सो न दूबरो बिभीषन सो,
 बूझि परी रावरेकी प्रेम-पराधीनता ।।3।।
 यहाँको सयानप अयानप सहस सम,
 सूधौ सतभाय कहे मिटति मलीनता ।
 गीध-सिला-सबरीकी सुधि सब दिन किये
 होइगी न साईं सों सनेह-हित-हीनता ।।4।।
 सकल कामना देत नाम तेरो कामतरु,
 सुमिरत होत कलिमल-छल-छीनता ।
 करुनानिधान! बरदान तुलसी चहत,
 सीतापति-भक्ति-सुरसरि-नीर-मीनता ।।5।।

(262)

kahyō na parata, binu kahē na rahyō parata,
 barō sukha kahata barē sōm, bali, dīnatā.
 prabhukī barā'ī barī, āpanī chōṭā'ī chōṭī,
 prabhukī punītatā, āpanī pāpa-pīnatā. 1.
 duhū ōra samujhi sakuci sahamata mana,
 sanamukha hōta suni svāmī-samīcīnatā.
 nātha-gunagātha gāyē, hātha jōri mātha nāyē,
 nīca'ū nivājē prīti-rītikī prabīnatā. 2.
 ēhī darabāra hai garaba tēm saraba-hāni,
 lābha jōga-chēmakō garībī-misakīnatā
 mōṭō dasakandha sō na dūbarō bibhīṣana sō,

būjhi parī rāvarēkī prēma-parādhīnatā. 3.
 yahām̐kō sayānapa ayānapa sahasa sama,
 sūdhau satabhāya kahē miṭati malīnatā.
 gīdha-silā-sabarīkī sudhi saba dina kiyē
 hō'igī na sā'īm sōm sanēha-hita-hīnatā. 4.
 sakala kāmanā dēta nāma tērō kāmataru,
 sumirata hōta kalimala-chala-chīnatā.
 karunānidhāna! baradāna tulasī cahata,
 sītāpati-bhakti-surasari-nīra-mīnatā. 5.

Verse no. 262— [Oh Lord, I am in a dilemma.] It is not possible (or it is difficult) to say anything, but equally difficult to keep quiet (*kaḥyō na parata, binu kahē na raḥyō parata*)¹.

I invoke your gracious and merciful nature to gather enough courage to humbly submit before you (*bali, dīnatā*) that though it is true that a person feels very glad and relieved when he narrates his tale of woes, miseries, sufferings and problems in front of his able superiors (*barō sukha kahata barē sōm*), but still I feel hesitant to do so when on the one hand I consider the Lord's greatness and the on the other hand the inconsequential nature of my complaints (*prabhukī barā'ī barī, āpanī chōṭā'ī chōṭī*), as well as my impertinence and meanness in approaching the Lord who is so holy and pure while I am so sinful, lowly and pervert (*prabhukī punītātā, āpanī pāpa-pīnatā*).

[¹A similar dilemma is faced by Tulsidas earlier in verse nos. 111 and 256 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.

To wit, though usually it is so comforting for a distressed person who is suffering from some kind of trouble to tell his Lord about his problems because it relieves his mental stress at once and assures him that his Lord would certainly solve his problems, but in my case I feel very reluctant to do so. The reason is that my problems are so tiny that there are not worth telling the Lord, as he would smile at me and say “you are like a child who gets upset by small things; why are you so perturbed by these inconsequential things which should not bother you at all if you regard yourself as my servant and devotee in the first place”.

A seeker must keep in mind the stature of the giver when asking for anything from the latter. For instance, if a person is given a rare chance to present himself before the king of the realm and ask for something, would he be so stupid to ask for worthless things and waste away this rare opportunity, or would he be wise to ask for some rare gift that suits the stature of the king, that does not undermine the king's majesty and greatness when this gift is shown to the world? Surely, only a mad person would ask a king for giving him something to eat for a day; it would be laughable!

The king would judge the nature, the character, the personality and the status of that person by what he asks from the king. It won't behove good for a man of noble upbringing to ask for tiny and worthless gifts from a king if the latter is so pleased with him that he is willing to give whatever is asked for. It's better not to ask for anything at all than seeking rubbish.

Tulsidas says that Lord Ram is not an ordinary King. He is the Supreme Being and the Lord God himself. So if one is given a chance to ask something from the Lord, wouldn't it be wise to ask for something rare and special—such as seeking spiritual welfare, eternal beatitude, the purest kind of bliss and happiness, for liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration and its attendant miseries,

and for emancipation and salvation of the soul? Isn't it so absurd and ridiculous to ask the Lord to relieve worldly sufferings which would howbeit certainly end one day when this gross body is discarded at the time of death?

Wouldn't it be better and wiser for him, therefore, to leave everything at the discretion of the Lord by asking for nothing but for the Lord's grace and mercy, because then the Lord would himself be in a dilemma as what to give to Tulsidas that would suit the Lord's majesty and stature. Obviously, the Lord would go on giving and giving but still think that it is not enough and in accordance with his stature; the Lord would feel self-conscious and think that whatever he has given to Tulsidas, or for that matter to any other seeker, is not much and enough.

By adopting this approach, Tulsidas would get to keep the cake and eat it as well: that is, he would be not only be relieved of all his worldly miseries and sufferings but in addition be blessed by eternal peace and happiness as well as by the reward of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation even without his asking for them.

So Tulsidas says that he is in a fix, not being able to decide what to do and say before the Lord.] (1).

Considering both these aspects (as outlined in stanza 1 herein above), my Mana (mind and heart) becomes reluctant due to hesitation (i.e., I can't gather courage to speak anything before your majesty) (*duhū ōra samujhi sakuci sahamata mana*).

But when I hear about the Lord's magnificent virtues, his graceful and magnanimous temperament, and his nature to welcome and accept with courtesy and politeness even the most lowly, the fallen, the downtrodden, the distressed and the wretched ones, I feel confident and gather courage once again (to approach him and narrate my woes to him) (*sanamukha hōta suni svāmī-samīcīnatā*).

Oh Lord (*nātha*)! It is well known that when someone sings your glories and pays tribute to you by bowing his head before you (*gunagātha gāyē, hātha jōri mātha nāyē*), then howsoever he may be lowly, sinful and wretched you have invariably made such a person fully contented and fulfilled (*nīca'ū nivājē prīti-rītikī prabīnatā*)².

[²To wit, you are so kind-hearted and magnanimous that if a person stands before you and praises your glorious nature, then you grant him boons so liberally that he is left with nothing more to expect or want.

Oh Lord, you are inclined to receive and welcome your devotees very respectfully, notwithstanding how wretched, resourceless, distressed, downtrodden, maligned, sinful and tainted they are. When they sing your divine glories and pay their obeisance to you by bowing their heads before you, you feel glad to shower your grace and benevolence upon them so much so that they feel delighted and fulfilled in every possible respect.] (2).

In this royal court (of Lord Sri Ram) everything is ruined by haughtiness, vanity, pride and ego (*ēhī darabāra hai garaba tēm saraba-hāni*), while being humble, meek, poor and courteous results in not only obtaining the rewards of welfare and good fortunes but also of one's sustenance and well-being that become assured (*lābha jōga-chēmakō garībī-misakīnatā*).

[Some of the instances are now cited here.] There was no one as 'fat' as (i.e. as famous in valour, strength and powers as the demon king of Lanka known by the name of) Ravana, whereas no one was as 'thin' as (i.e. weak and humble as his

brother) Vibhishan (mōṭō dasakandha sō na dūbarō bibhīṣana sō)—but in their case, your preference for the virtues of affection and total surrender (by the devotee Vibhishan) comes to the fore clearly (būjhi parī rāvarēkī prēma-parādhīnatā)³.

[³This story of Lord Ram accepting Vibhishan and declaring the reason for this acceptance, as well as of the Lord declaring him as the future king of Lanka which meant sure death of Ravana indirectly, has been narrated in the epic “Ram Charit Manas”, in its Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 41—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

When Vibhishan was insulted publicly and kicked out of the kingdom of Lanka by his elder brother Ravana, the former came to surrender before Lord Ram. The Lord had then most cheerfully welcomed Vibhishan and gave him shelter when the Lord saw that he was utterly distressed and needs the Lord’s protection. Further, when Lord Ram observed that Vibhihan is very loyal to him and has great devotion for him, the Lord decided to eliminate Vibhishan’s tormentor, i.e. his elder brother Ravana, and restore his honour by crowning him on the throne of Lanka. This preference shown towards Vibhishan over his arch rival Ravana, though both were brothers belonging to the same demon family, establishes the fact that Lord Ram shows an inclination to favour anyone who has affection and devotion for the Lord, no matter how resourceless, powerless and humble he may be.

At that time Lord Ram did not think twice that accepting Vibhishan would anatagonise his powerful enemy Ravana who still held the Lord’s wife Sita in his captivity, and that this might prove dangerous for her safety.] (3).

Here (in Lord Ram’s court), having and showing off one’s cleverness, cunning, tricks and crookedness are equivalent to thousands of stupidities and foolish behaviours combined into one (yahām̐kō sayānapa ayānapa sahasa sama). [To wit, one should not try to be smart and deceitful before the Lord. It would be highly stupid to do so.]

Verily and forsooth, in the court of Lord Ram, all blemishes, sorrows, darkness and malignancies of a person are erased by his honestly accepting his sins, misdeeds, faults and misdemeanours with a mind and heart that are frank, truthful, pure, simple, straightforward and deceitless (sūdhau satabhāya kahē miṭati malīnatā).

If you (Tulsidas says to himself) remember the fate of the Vulture (Jatau), the Stone (Ahilya) and Sabari⁴ (gīdha-silā-sabarīkī sudhi saba dina kiyē), your love, affection and devotion for the Lord will never diminish (hō’igī na sām̐r̐ sām̐ sanēha-hita-hīnatā)⁵.

[⁴The story of ‘Jatau’, the vulture, has been narrated in verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’; that of ‘Ahilya’, the cursed wife of sage Guatam who had become a stone, in verse no. 43, stanza no. 3; and that of ‘Sabari’, the outcaste tribal woman, in verse no. 152, stanza no. 8.

⁵They were all lowly, wretched, humble, outcastes—but seeing their faith, love and devotion, the Lord accepted and liberated them cheerfully. The Lord gave them eternal peace and happiness; he granted them liberation and deliverance from the horrible life they were leading, and the Lord gave their souls the boon of emancipation and salvation. Tulsidas says that if one remembers their fate then one feels very comfortable and reassured of peace and freedom from torments associated with life in this world because he too would be protected by Lord Ram. But one must remember that it is only possible if one has complete faith, devotion and affection for

Lord Ram and his divine name. Simply reading their stories is of no good if no lesson is drawn from it.] (4).

Your name (i.e. Lord Ram's holy name) can fulfil all desires like the Kalpa Tree (which is the all wish-fulfilling heavenly Tree of the Gods) (*sakala kāmānā dēta nāma tērō kāmataru*).

Immediately on remembering your holy name, all the sins, evils, vices, deceits, trickeries, crookedness and falsehoods of Kaliyug get disintegrated and become harmless (*sumirata hōta kalimala-chala-chīnatā*).

Oh Lord who is an abode of mercy and compassion (*karunānidhāna*)! Tulsidas wants only this one boom (*baradāna tulasī cahata*)—that he should always remain floating like a fish is in the holy water of river Ganges that is symbolised by the nectar of having devotion and affection Lord Ram who is the husband of Sita (*sītāpati-bhakti-surasari-nīra-mīnatā*)⁵.

[⁵To wit, Tulsidas essentially says that just like a fish that cannot survive a moment without water, he too should not live a moment without having devotion and affection for Lord Ram.] (5).

[Note—In this verse, the emphasise is on having unwavering devotion, faith and affection for Lord Ram and his divine and holy Name.]

Tulasīdāsa reaffirms his abiding and honest devotion for Lord Śrī Rāma

(263)

नाथ नीके कै जानिबी ठीक जन—जीयकी ।
 रावरो भरोसो नाह कै सु—प्रेम—नेम लियो
 रुचिर रहनि रुचि मति गति तीयकी ।। 1 ।।
 कुकृत—सुकृत बस सब ही सों संग पश्यो,
 परखी पराई गति, आपने हूँ कीयकी ।
 मेरे भलेको गोसाईं! पोचको, न सोच—संक
 हौं हूँ किये कहौं सौं ह सौं ची सीय—पीयकी ।। 2 ।।
 ग्यानहू—गिराके स्वामी, बाहर—अंतरजामी,
 यहाँ क्यों दुरैगी बात मुखकी औ हीयकी?
 तुलसी तिहारो, तुमहीं पै तुलसीके हित,
 राखि कहौं हौं तो जो पै हैहौं माखी घीयकी ।। 3 ।।

(263)

nātha nīkē kai jānibī ṭhīka jana-jīyakī.
 rāvarō bharōsō nāha kai su-prēma-nēma liyō
 rucira rahani ruci mati gati tīyakī. 1.
 kukṛta-sukṛta basa saba hī sōm saṅga paraīō,
 parakhī parāī gati, āpanē hūm kīyakī.

mērē bhalēkō gōsā'īm! pōcakō, na sōca-saṅka
 haunhūṁṁ kiye kahauṁ saunha sām'cī sīya-pīyakī. 2.
 gyānahū-girākē svāmī, bāhara-antarajāmī,
 yahām' kyōm duraigī bāta mukhakī au hīyakī?
 tulasī tihārō, tumahīm pai tulasikē hita,
 rākhi kahauṁ hauṁ tō jō pai hvaihauṁ mākhī ghīyakī. 3.

Verse no. 263—Oh Lord (nātha)! Please be kind to understand properly and correctly what is inside the mind of this humble servant (i.e. devotee, follower, subordinate) of yours, and let there be no ambiguity in it (nikē kai jānibī ṭhika jana-jīyakī).

My intellect, which is like a charming and loyal woman (“tīya”—who is symbolically like my wife because it is faithful to me and is always eager to do what I myself wish to do), has taken a vow to have complete faith and reliance upon your majesty, and treat this virtue as her de-facto husband and lord (rāvarō bharōsō nāha kai su-prēma-nēma liyō). With this determination, this woman (i.e. my intellect) owes her allegiance only to you, is loyal only to you, and has decided to have excellent virtues, upright character, righteous behaviour and noble conduct that is most appropriate and befitting for her husband and lord (rucira rahani ruci mati gati tīyakī)¹.

[¹“To wit, since I have decided mentally that Lord Ram is my only Lord and Redeemer, since I have finally surrendered myself to the Lord and declare my allegiance to him, my mind and intellect too follow suit as they are extremely loyal to me and always help me to carry out my wishes.”

Here, Tulsidas tells Lord Ram that when he prays to the Lord and says that he is his faithful devotee and loyal to him, he actually means it. There is no deceit, trickery or pretension in his mind or heart when he declares his devotion and faith for Lord Ram. He wants to assure the Lord that his mind and intellect are fully agreeable and cooperating with him when he makes this declaration, and the Lord should have no doubts about his intentions and integrity.] (1).

Oh Lord, driven by my fate and circumstances that were further complicated by the the good or the bad effects of my deeds, I was compelled to live with all sorts of people in this world and somehow cope with them (kukṛta-sukṛta basa saba hī sōm saṅga parāiō). [To wit, I had no control over this situation.]

I have had a lot of experience and have learnt a lot by this interaction (with people of diverse nature, character and attitude). I have tested their nature and intentions, and now I have become quite familiar with the varied ways of this world, some quite honest and comforting, and others that are quite misleading and painful (parakhī parāi gati).

I have also learnt much about the deeds being categorised as good or bad and their respective consequences so as to judge the quality and the result of my own deeds myself (āpanē hūṁṁ kīyakī). [So I concluded that no one else but I myself am to blame for my present situation—for one cannot escape from the Rule of Nature that one is liable for what one does. Therefore one must not blame others for his sufferings and pains, nor should one feel jealous of others if they are happy and peaceful, because both the situations are the results of corresponding deeds.]

Oh Lord (gōsā'īm)! I am not the least worried or afraid about my own welfare; I am not at all perturbed about my future being either good or bad (mērē bhalēkō pōcakō, na sōca-saṅka). [This is because once I have surrendered to you

and taken shelter and refuge with you, no further harm can ever come to me. Besides this, it is now your responsibility to take good care of me; so why should I worry or feel scared about my future?]

I say under oath in the name of the ‘Lord who is dear to Sita’ (“*sīya-pīyakī*”—i.e. Lord Ram) that whatever I am saying is the truth, and nothing but the truth (*haunhūṁ kiyē kahauṁ saunha sām̐cī*) (2).

[If I speak deceptively and try to cheat or trick you, it wouldn't succeed because—] You are the Lord of wisdom, knowledge, intellect and discrimination as well as of speech (*gyānahū-girākē svāmī*). You are aware of what is outside (the external world) as well as what is inside (in the heart, mind and intellect) (*bāhara-antarajāmī*). [Because you are omniscient and all-knowing; because you reside in the subtle heart and the subtle mind of all living beings as their ‘consciousness’ and ‘conscience’ respectively.]

Therefore, how can one conceal from you about the real intentions of what is being spoken by the mouth, and separate it from what is hidden inside one's heart and mind? (*yahām kyōm duraigī bāta mukhakī au hīyakī*). [One can't cheat you with sweet words spoken to please you, while having bitter poison hidden inside the heart.]

Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, it is a fact that ‘Tulsidas is yours, and you are the Lord who does good for Tulsidas’ (*tulasī tihārō, tumahīm pai tulasikē hita*). Let me be like ‘a fly in the butter’ (*hvaihaum mākhī ghīyakī*) if what I declare here is wrong or deceitful even in a single word (*rākhi kahauṁ haum tō jō pai*)².

[²If a fly is found in butter, we pick it and fling it out. Not only that, we will scoop a little amount of butter from around the place where the fly had been found and throw it away along with the fly as that portion of the butter would be deemed to be contaminated and unfit for use. So Tulsidas says that if he is speaking a lie when he says that “he belongs to Lord Ram, and the Lord is his only one who worries about Tulsidas’ welfare”, then let him be thrown away by the Lord disdainfully and contemptuously just like one throws away a “fly found in butter”.

Conversely, this statement of being like a “fly in the butter” also refers to the situation which is just like a fly that dies when it gets trapped in a can of butter, as it gets suffocated due to the butter's viscosity, and unable to fly out of it, it dies. Then the fly is picked up and thrown away contemptuously. So likewise, let Tulsidas suffer interminably if he is speaking a lie about his faith in Lord Ram.

By alluding to the “fly in the butter”, Tulsidas asserts that what he says is honest and absolutely truthful, and if it is not then let Lord Ram eject him like one throws a dead fly from the butter.] (3).

Lord Śrī Rāma as the matchless Lord, while all others are selfish

(264)

मेरो कह्यो सुनि पुनि भावै तोहि करि सो ।
चारिहू बिलोचन बिलोकु तू तिलोक महुँ
तेरो तिहु काल कहु को है हितू हरि—सो ॥१॥
नये—नये नेह अनुभये देह—गेह बसि,

परखे प्रपंची प्रेम, परत उघरि सो ।
 सुहृद—समाज दगाबाजिहीको सौदा—सूत,
 जब जाको काज तब मिलै पाँय परि सो ।।2।।
 बिबुध सयाने, पहिचाने कैधौं नाहीं नीके,
 देत एक गुन, लेत कोटि गुन भरि सो ।
 करम—धरम श्रम—फल रघुबर बिनु,
 राखको सो होम है, ऊसर कैसो बरिसो ।।3।।
 आदि—अंत—बीच भलो, करै सबहीको
 जाको जस लोक—बेद रह्यो है बगरि—सो ।
 सीतापति सारिखो न साहिब सील—निधान,
 कैसे कल परै सठ! बैठो सो बिसरि—सो ।।4।।
 जीवको जीवन—प्राण, प्राणको परम हित
 प्रीतम, पुनीतकृत नीचन, निदरि सो ।
 तुलसी! तोको कृपालु जो कियो कोसलपालु,
 चित्रकूटको चरित्र चेतु चित करि सो ।।5।।

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mērō kahyō suni puni bhāvai tōhi kari sō.
 cārihū bilōcana bilōku tū tilōka maham̐
 tērō tihu kāla kahu kō hai hitū hari-sō. 1.
 nayē-nayē nēha anubhayē dēha-gēha basi,
 parakhē prapañcī prēma, parata ughari sō.
 suhr̥da-samāja dagābājihīkō saudā-sūta,
 jaba jākō kāja taba milai pām̐ya pari sō. 2.
 bibudha sayānē, pahicānē kaidhaur̥m nāhīm̐ nīkē,
 dēta ēka guna, lēta kōṭi guna bhari sō.
 karama-dharama śrama-phala raghubara binu,
 rākhakō sō hōma hai, ūsara kaisō barisō. 3.
 ādi-anta-bīca bhalō, bhalō karai sabahīkō
 jākō jasa lōka-bēda rahyō hai bagari-sō.
 sītāpati sārīkhō na sāhiba sīla-nidhāna,
 kaisē kala parai saṭha! baiṭhō sō bisari-sō. 4.
 jīvākō jivana-prāna, prānakō parama hita
 prītama, punītakṛta nīcana, nidari sō.
 tulasī! tōkō kṛpālu jō kiyō kōsalapālu,
 citrakūṭakō caritra cētu cita kari sō. 5.

Verse no. 264—Addressing his mind and heart, Tulsidas says— ‘Listen to me and pay heed to my honest advice at least once, then do whatever you like best (mērō kahyō suni puni bhāvai tōhi kari sō).

See with all the four eyes you have (“cārihū bilōcana bilōku tū”—i.e. the two external, physical eyes of the body, and the two internal eyes symbolised by the mind and the intellect) and tell me whether you have any one to take care of you selflessly, if there is anyone who is your true well-wisher and benefactor except the Lord Hari (Sri Ram) anywhere in the world (tērō kō hai hitū hari-sō), whether it be in all the three Lokas (such as the subterranean, the terrestrial and the heavenly

worlds—“*tilōka maham*”) or in any of the three periods of time (such as the past, the present and the future—“*tihu kāla kahu*”) (1).

[Here, Tulsidas addresses his ‘true self’, i.e. his soul.] Residing in your home represented by your gross physical body, you had experienced the nuances of relationships of different kinds, some of affection and others of disaffection, that you have had with those whom you had regarded as being your kith and kin and relatives, in your present life as well as in your previous lives (*nayē-nayē nēha anubhayē dēha-gēha basi*).

By experience you must have judged by now how much and how truly they actually loved and respected you; was their love and respect for you real and true, or was it merely a smokescreen to deceive you for their selfish ends (*parakhē prapanī prēma*)¹.

[¹To wit, if you were intelligent and wise you must have observed that everyone who showed affection for you had some sort of vested interest in you. If you met their expectations from you, if you were of any use to them and helped them achieve their goals, then they took interest in you and pretended to be your best friend and a loving relative. But if you did not stand up to their expectations from you, they turned away from you. It must be obvious to you by now through personal experience that each individual whom you think loved you and had affection for you was driven by his or her self-interest. Verily, none was interested in whether or not you were suffering on their account, what pains and strains you had to endure to fulfil their demands and needs. As long as you continued to oblige them, they proffered their affection for you, but once you asked them to repay your loans to them, they became your sworn enemies!]

By and by, the mystery and the secret of all forms of pseudo affections and all sorts of false relationships came out into the open for you (*parata ughari sō*).

You must have realised what really this society of friends is in this gross world where all relationships are hinged on mutual benefits that are derived from material things, where all relationships are full of pretensions and deceit, and no one is really interested in your personal welfare and spiritual well-being (*suhṛda-samāja dagābājihikō*).

You must have understood that all relationships are like a trade where goods are exchanged or bartered for gains and profits, where deceit, cunning, trickery and treachery are the instruments that are employed by all to strike a good bargain (*saudā-sūta*). [Honesty and truth are for the foolish and the failures in life; falsehood, pretensions and cunning are the norms for getting success and praise. In this environment, say who was your true friend in life?]

When anyone has some work to be got done from someone, the former would bend over backwards to please the latter; he would virtually prostrate and put his head at the feet of the latter so that the particular work can be got done successfully (*jaba jākō kāja taba milai pām̐ya pari sō*). [But once his objective is achieved, he would not even recognise that person who had helped him achieve success in getting the work done; he won’t recognise his benefactor.] (2).

[What to talk of ordinary creatures when—] The Gods themselves are also very clever, cunning and selfish (*bibudha sayānē*)—have you not recognised them properly (i.e., have you not realised how selfish and cunning they are) (*pahicānē kaidhaur̐ nāhīr̐ nīkē*)?

If these Gods give something to you (by way of boons or blessings or good fortunes) then they would first take away or extract many times more from you for this extending this favour (in the form of severe austerities, penances, offerings, sacrifices, rituals, worship, adulation, vows, meditation, chanting of the holy Mantra etc. that you do to please them) (*dēta ēka guna, lēta kōṭi guna bhari sō*).

Now as far as ‘Karma-Dharma’ are concerned (i.e. doing righteous deeds, taking correct actions, and generally behaving in accordance to the principles of righteousness, propriety, ethics and nobility of conduct and thought), they too remain mere labours (worthless efforts) if they are not supported by the blessings of Lord Ram (*karama-dharama śrama-phala raghubara binu*).

All these ‘Karmas-Dharmas’ devoid of devotion and faith in Lord Ram are akin to doing a ‘Havana’ (fire sacrifice) on ash (because the fire cannot be sustained on ash and it will soon be extinguished, thereby ruining the whole sacrifice) (*rākhakō sō hōma hai*), or like rainfall on infertile soil (because no matter how much rain falls on such a piece of land, it won’t produce any crop and would just drain off) (*ūsara kaisō barisō*)².

[²To wit, all Karma and Dharma remain mere physical exercises if they are not directed to attain spiritual welfare of a person, and this welfare is centered on having devotion for Lord Ram. If this goal is not achieved, then the rewards that one gets by doing meritorious deeds known as Karma and by observing the principles of Dharma are not of any real value because they are limited to benefits that one gets in this gross mortal world which is temporary and perishable. So whatever comfort, pleasure and happiness that one gets are also of limited value and transient as the life itself is in this this gross world. If one does the same Karma and Dharma by aiming to have devotion for Lord Ram, and offers whatever rewards are due to him to the Lord, then the benefits one gets are manifold times more greater and sustainable—for he gets to have eternal peace and happiness, is rewarded with liberation and deliverance from the cycle of miseries and torments, and gets to attain emancipation and salvation for his soul that in turn grants eternal rest to him.

If anyone is opposed to Lord Sri Ram and relies solely on his own efforts, such as in performing of rituals and observing sacraments, in acquiring knowledge of the scriptures and their wisdom, in order to attain emancipation, salvation and bliss, then all such endeavours and exercises would be in vain.] (3).

He who is good and auspicious in a wholesome way, whether it was in the past (in the beginning), in the present or at the end (*ādi-anta-bīca bhalō*), he who provides auspiciousness and always does good for all the creatures irrespective of who they may be (*bhalō karai sabahikō*), and he whose divinity, glory and majesty is world famous and universally acknowledged by the Vedas (scriptures) in an unequivocal term (*jākō jasa lōka-bēda rahyō hai bagari-sō*)—verily indeed and in all sooth, there is no other Lord who is more virtuous, more auspicious and possesses more excellent characters than Lord Sri Ram who is a dear husband of Sita (*sītāpati sārīkhō na sāhiba sīla-nidhāna*)³.

[³Lord Ram’s majestic glories and excellent characters are matchless and divine. They have been universally praised by all in this creation, and the scriptures too have proclaimed them unanimously. Indeed, there is no other Lord or God as praise-worthy as Lord Ram anywhere in this existence.

The Lord has been divine, auspicious, glorious and a doer of good for all since the beginning of everything, is so even now, and will be the same till the end.]

[Tulsidas admonishes himself and says—] Oh you wicked and good-for-nothing fellow (*saṭha*)! You seem to have virtually forgotten such a wonderful and magnanimous Lord as Sri Ram (who is ever so ready to look after you) (*baīṭhō sō bisari-sō*), and then you lament about the uncertainty of your future (*kaisē kala parai*)⁴!

[⁴In this situation, say, aren't you a truly dumb fellow? Woe to you and your wisdom! To wit, you are so worried about your future and well-being, but you don't realise that you are responsible yourself for all your worries. When you have such a gracious, merciful and all-able Lord over your head to look after your needs and take care of everything for you, it makes no sense in your being worried about anything at all. Surely, since you do worry and lament about your past, present and future, it is obvious that you have forgotten the Lord. Otherwise, there should have been no cause for your fears, consternations and perplexities. Say, aren't you utterly dumb and stupid?] (4).

Alas! You are virtually insulting him (“*nidari sō*”—i.e., ignoring, neglecting and not paying due reverence to Lord Ram) who is the very life of all living beings (“*jīvakō jīvana-prāna*”—i.e., who is the soul and the essence of all living beings; who is the pure consciousness that infuses life in the gross body of all the creatures; and without whom no creature can ever survive), who is the greatest well-wisher and benefactor of all living beings as he is the dearest entity of their lives (*prānakō parama hita*), and who is the most beloved (dearest) of those who are lowly, fallen, wretched and humble, and their purifier and redeemer (*prītama, punītakṛta nīcana*).

Oh Tulsidas (*tulasī*)! You should concentrate your mind and heart on the act of grace, kindness and mercy that the King of Kaushal, Lord Sri Ram, had performed for your benefit at Chitrakoot (*tōkō kṛpālu jō kiyō kōsalapālu, citrakūṭakō caritra cētu cita kari sō*)⁵.

[⁵Legend has it that Lord Sri Ram and his brother Laxman had once manifested themselves as two Rajput warriors astride two horses before Tulsidas at Chitrakoot, but unfortunately Tulsidas could not recognise the Lord. He however regretted later on when he came to know about the truth of this revelation, but it was too late by then.

So in this stanza Tulsidas reminisces about that wonderful incident and curses himself, saying that he is such a great fool that he forgets such rare blessings so easily, and that in spite of Lord Ram showing exceptional favour to him by appearing before him in person he continues to lament and wail like an ordinary person. What more stupidity can a person exhibit? Why doesn't he, Tulsidas, exult and feel exhilarated at the love and affection that the Lord has for him; why does he feel neglected and forlorn when Lord Ram is so eager to take care of him and holds him so dear to his heart as to reveal himself personally before Tulsidas?

Here, Tulsidas advises himself that he must recall that incident and feel exhilarated that the Lord had himself revealed before you to give you a rare privilege of having a divine glimpse of the holy Lord from up so close, an opportunity that even great sages and hermits are denied. You should feel extremely blessed and honoured by this incident, but instead of feeling ecstatic and spiritually blessed you continue to lament and wail like an ordinary creature. Woe to you and your low level of wisdom! Wake up and come to realise how blessed and fortunate you are indeed, instead of lamenting and grieving about your misfortunes and an imaginarily doomed destiny.] (5).

Tulasīdāsa requests Lord Rāma to caution Kaliyuga

(265)

तन सुचि, मन रुचि, मुख कहौ 'जन हौं सिय-पीको' ।
 केहि अभाग जान्यो नहीं, जो न होइ नाथ सों नातो-नेह न नीको ॥1॥
 जल चाहत पावक लहौ, बिष होत अमीको ।
 कलि-कुचाल संतनि कही सोइ सही, मोहि कछु फहम न तरनि तमीको ॥2॥
 जानि अंध अंजन कहै बन-बाधिनी-घीको ।
 सुनि उपचार बिकारको सुबिचार करौं जब, तब बुधि बल हरै हीको ॥3॥
 प्रभु सों कहत सकुचात हौं, परौं जनि फिरि फीको ।
 निकट बोलि, बलि, बरजिये, परिहरै ख्याल अब तुलसिदास जड़ जीको ॥4॥

(265)

tana suci, mana ruci, mukha kahaurṁ 'jana haurṁ siya-pīkō'.
 kēhi abhāga jān'yō nahīṁ, jō na hō'i nātha sōm nātō-nēha na nīkō. 1.
 jala cāhata pāvaka lahaurṁ, biṣa hōta amīkō.
 kali-kucāla santani kahī sō'i sahī, mōhi kachu phahama na tarani tamīkō. 2.
 jāni andha anjana kahai bana-bādhinī-ghīkō.
 suni upacāra bikārakō subicāra karaurṁ jaba, taba budhi bala harai hīkō. 3.
 prabhu sōm kahata sakucāta haurṁ, paraurṁ jani phiri phīkō.
 nikaṭa bōli, bali, barajiyē, pariharai khyāla aba tulasidāsa jaṛa jīkō. 4.

Verse no. 265—Oh Lord! I try to keep my body clean (i.e. I do not voluntarily indulge in sinful acts and try to be good, fair and honest in all my dealings and actions; I observe religious vows and sacraments faithfully) (*tana suci*), my mind has interest in auspicious things and cooperates with me in this endeavour (of cultivating good virtues and having devotion for you) (*mana ruci*), and I publicly announce that I am a follower and servant of the Lord who is dear to Sita, i.e. Lord Ram (*mukha kahaurṁ 'jana haurṁ siya-pīkō'*)—but inspite of these good things and a conducive environment, I fail to understand by which misfortune I am unable to develop and establish the best kind of relationship with the Lord (Sri Ram) and have affection for him (*kēhi abhāga jān'yō nahīṁ, jō na hō'i nātha sōm nātō-nēha na nīkō*) (1).

The conditions have become so bad for me that when I need (or ask for) water, I get fire instead (*jala cāhata pāvaka lahaurṁ*). Similarly, Amrit (the soothing elixir of life) becomes poison-like for me (*biṣa hōta amīkō*)¹.

[¹To wit, inspite of my best effort to acquire peace, happiness, bliss and tranquillity in life by leading the best sort of life I possibly can, I get agitation, torments, miseries, unhappiness and disturbances of all kinds instead.]

Indeed, what the saints have described of Kaliyug and its inherent nature and ways of being evil, corrupt, deceitful, deceptive, cunning and treacherous are all correct (*kali-kucāla santani kahī sō'i sahī*).

I have become so deluded under its influences that I have begun to hallucinate so much so that I am unable to distinguish between sunshine and night (*mōhi kachu phahama na tarani tamikō*)².

[²To wit, Kaliyug has so much corrupted my mind and tainted my intellect that I am unable to distinguish between what is good and what is bad for me. Perhaps this is the reason why I am suffering so much. It may be that Kaliyug has prevailed over my wisdom so much that I have failed to have complete faith and devotion for Lord Ram as is evident from the fact that I keep on worrying about my future when I know that the Lord is always there to take care of all my needs, both spiritual and temporal. So my worrying and lamenting makes no sense. Refer verse no. 264 herein above.] (2).

When Kaliyug sees that I am blinded, it pretends to be my well-wisher, and advises me to use an eye ointment made from clarified butter extracted from the milk of a lioness living in the wild forest to cure my blindness (*jāni andha anjana kahai bana-bādhinī-ghikō*).

Since I am already feeling so miserable by being blind, my mind and intellect have become so agitated that they are eager to find some relief whatsoever from any source. In this scenario, I fail to see through the wickedness of Kaliyug. When it finds me so eager to fulfil my desires, it manages to steal me of whatever wisdom I have (*taba budhi bala harai hikō*). I foolishly begin to follow its instructions in the hope of finding some remedy for my sufferings, but when I end up by getting more misery, agony and grief in the wake I begin to regret and start pondering over my misfortunes and how foolishly I allowed myself to be misled by Kaliyug's evil designs (*sunī upacāra bikārakō subicāra karaum jaba*)³.

[³Kaliyug makes a fool out of me. If I go near a lioness in the forest to get its milk for preparing the ointment, I am surely inviting death, for as soon as I approach the wild animal it would tear me apart!

To wit, my eagerness and desire to attain peace and happiness in life had so much clouded my wisdom and intellect, i.e. made me 'blind', that I failed to see what was actually for my good when I listened to the cunning advice given to me by Kaliyug. When it found that I am so eager to find happiness and peace for myself that I would blindly follow anyone who provides me a way to achieve my objective, this wicked fellow pretended to be my friend and advised me to find what I am seeking, i.e. pleasure, comfort, joy and happiness, by pursuing the gross world and its material things. In my blind desire I forgot to realise that this world and its sense objects are all givers of unhappiness and grief; I forgot to understand that the world and its things are all transient and the so-called comfort and pleasures they give are like the water seen in a mirage on the hot sand of a desert—the more one tries to go near them the further away they recede from him. In the end only frustration and dismay as well as misery, pain and torment are all that remain. And by the time I have come to realise this mistake, my whole life has already been spent in vain.] (3).

[Since my intellect, wisdom and discrimination have all been destroyed by Kaliyug, I am deceived and trapped into believing the prescription proffered by it—as a result of which I start indulging in pleasures related to the sense objects of this world and spend my time pursuing them relentlessly. In this situation when I begin to love the world and be devoted to it, how can I have true affection and devotion for Lord Ram? The two can't go together!]

In this background, oh Lord, I have something to say to you must earnestly and humbly. But at the same time I feel very hesitant (prabhu sōm kahata sakucāta hauṁ) because I fear that you would not pay heed to me and my prayers would lose their value (paraṁ jani phiri phikō). For this reason I invoke your gracious and benevolent nature of giving a patient hearing to even those who are lowly and fallen (bali) to politely plead before you as follows: Please be kind to summon this fellow Kaliyug near you, and instruct him to stop his nefarious ways and desist from thinking of creating nuisance with ill-witted people like Tulsidas (who are not intelligent and wise enough to see through Kaliyug's evil nature and sinful designs, and are not strong enough to resist him on their own) (nikaṭa bōli barajiyē, pariharai khyāla aba tulasidāsa jaṛa jikō)⁴.

[⁴To wit, Tulsidas asks Lord Ram to put a tight leash on Kaliyug so that he stops tormenting humble creatures and misleading them. If the Lord does not intervene on behalf of humble people like Tulsidas, then a time would come when all the devotees of the Lord would begin to suffer under the horrifying influences of Kaliyug. And surely it would not be good for the Lord's own reputation that his devotees suffer for any reason whatsoever.] (4).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 220, 221 earlier, and verse no. 266 herein below of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' in the context of this verse which describes the evil nature of Kaliyug.]

Evil Designs of Kaliyuga

(266)

ज्यों ज्यों निकट भयो चहौं कृपालु! त्यों त्यों दूरि पस्यो हौं ।
 तुम चहुँ जुग रस एक राम! हौं हूँ रावरो, जदपि अघ अवगुननि भस्यो हौं ।।1।।
 बीच पाइ एहि नीच बीच ही छरनि छस्यो हौं ।
 हौं सुबरन कुबरन कियो, नृपतें भिखारि करि, सुमतितें कुमति कस्यो हौं ।।2।।
 अगनित गिरि-कानन फिस्यो, बिनु आगि जस्यो हौं
 चित्रकूट गये हौं लखि कलिकी कुचालि सब, अब अपडरनि डस्यो हौं ।।3।।
 माथ नाइ नाथ सों कहौं, हाथ जोरि खस्यो हौं ।
 चीन्हों चोर जिय मारिहै तुलसी सो कथा सुनि प्रभुसोंगुदरि निबस्यो हौं ।।4।।

(266)

jiyōm jiyōm nikaṭa bhayō cahauṁ kṛpālu! tyōm tyōm dūri paraīō hauṁ.
 tuma cahum̐ juga rasa ēka rāma! hauṁ hūm̐ rāvarō, jadapi agha avagunani
 bharaīō hauṁ. 1.
 bīca pā'i ēhi nīca bīca hī charani charaīō hauṁ.
 hauṁ subarana kubarana kiyō, nṛpatēm̐ bhikhāri kari, sumatitēm̐ kumati
 karaīō hauṁ. 2.
 aganita giri-kānana phiraīō, binu āgi jaraīō hauṁ
 citrakūṭa gayē hauṁ lakhi kalikī kucālī saba, aba apaḍarani ḍaraīō hauṁ. 3.
 mātha nā'i nātha sōm kahauṁ, hātha jōri kharaīō hauṁ.
 cīnhōm cōra jiya mārihai tulasī sō kathā suni prabhusōṅgudari

nibarañō haum̃. 4.

Verse no. 266—Oh Lord who is graceful, compassionate and kind (krpālu)! What a dilemma it is that the more I try to come near you, the further I go away from you (jyōm̃ jyōm̃ nikaṭa bhayō cahaum̃ tyōm̃ tyōm̃ dūri parañō haum̃).

Oh Lord Ram (rāmā)! You have always remained constant, steady, uniform, immutable and unchanging in all the four Yugas (i.e. the four eras that constitute one cycle of creation and destruction; they are called Sata, Treta, Dwapar and Kali Yugas respectively) (tuma cahum̃ juga rasa ēka), and I have also always been under your majesty's tutelage during this cycle (haum̃ hūm̃ rāvarō) though I am full of sins, evils, turpitudes, perversions, vices and unrighteousness (jadapi agha avagunani bharañō haum̃) (1).

Finding that I am alone (i.e., separated from you) during the present era, this wicked and wretched fellow Kaliyug has deceived me by his trickery midway (bīca pā'i ēhi nīca bīca hī charani charañō haum̃).

I was like pure gold in the beginning (i.e. I was pure, immaculate, uncorrupt, pious, righteous and auspicious), but Kaliyug has converted me into someone who is tainted with impurities (haum̃ subarana kubarana kiyō)¹.

Kaliyug made me a pauper from being a king (nr̥patēm̃ bhikhāri kari)²; he made me an ignorant fool from being a wise and exalted one (sumatitēm̃ kumati karañō haum̃)³.

[¹To wit, I was initially an embodiment or an image of the supreme blissful state of pure consciousness, but this Kaliyug has transformed me into a corrupt, decadent, pervert and depraved person. My primary form is the pure consciousness known as the Atma or soul, and it is eternally holy, divine, pure, blissful and contented, but this wicked fellow Kaliyug had cast his evil eyes on me and clouded my wisdom so much that I could not see who I actually was, but began to see myself from the tainted prism that Kaliyug put before my eyes.

Under the evil influences of Kaliyug I forgot all about who I actually am, I forgot that my primary form is the pure conscious Atma that is not only eternally holy and divine but is also an image of the Supreme Consciousness represented by Lord Ram, and so therefore I am one with and inseparable from the Lord! I forgot it. Under the deluding influences of Kaliyug I began to think that my identity is the gross body that lives in this equally gross world of gross things.

Kaliyug first blindfolded me by covering my wisdom and intellect with a thick cloud of delusions, and when it finally allowed me to see it thrust a tainted prism represented by lust, passion, corruption and evil before my eyes so that I got a distorted view of the world. The result was catastrophic for me. I began to hallucinate and started being attracted towards all things that are worth discarding; I found charm in the gross world and its sense objects; I found pleasure in gratification of my sense organs; I enjoyed sensual pleasures and plunged headlong in the affairs of the world as if this was my final destiny, and there was nothing beyond it. I pursued this world so diligently that all my energy was spent in this endeavour till a time was reached when I realised that Kaliyug has taken me for a ride. I had moved far away from the right path my soul was proceeding on towards my final goal of attaining emancipation and salvation, and alas I had got myself trapped in misery and grief in my pursuit of the mirage that Kaliyug had unfolded before my greedy eyes.

Alas, though I had been so close to Lord Ram in the beginning, I have so foolishly moved away from him now. But the Lord must understand that I am not to be blamed for my misfortunes; it is this rascal Kaliyug that had misled me. Of course I don't deny that I did allow myself to fall prey to Kaliyug's nefarious designs, but after all I am a human being, and the temptations thrown before me by it were so huge and enticing that I slipped and fell down.

But I have recovered myself and got my senses back now. So I pray to Lord Ram to forgive me. If the Lord does want to punish the culprit, then he should punish Kaliyug and not me because I was helpless against the might and the masterful crafty nature of Kaliyug.

²Like a king I was so happy and contented in the beginning. Then this fellow Kaliyug pulled me in a pit of miseries and torments that left me wailing and lamenting like a beggar. The assets by way of peace, bliss, contentedness and happiness that my pure self had was robbed by Kaliyug who left me disenfranchised and grieving.

³My primary form was pure consciousness known as the Atma that is inherently wise and enlightened. But now I am behaving so stupidly under the delusory effects of Kaliyug that has affected my entire life.] (2).

Since then (i.e., since Kaliyug had cast his evil eyes on me), I have been wandering aimlessly (like a mad man, or a vagrant, a vagabond and a beggar) in the mountains and forests (i.e., everywhere in this world in search of peace and happiness) (*aganita giri-kānana phiraiō*). But all I got in return was getting burnt (tormented endlessly) without a physical fire (*binu āgi jaraīō haurṁ*)⁴.

[⁴To wit, I roamed everywhere in this world in search of peace and happiness, but all I got were sufferings, torments, grief and miseries. Under delusions cast upon my mind and intellect by Kaliyug I could not realise that my true peace and happiness would be found at one single place if I just approached Lord Ram and surrendered myself before him, praying before the Lord for forgiveness and mercy, instead of wondering madly in the world, pleading before this and that god, wailing before this and that worldly lord or master, or trying so many methods and formulas that I was advised to try to get over my misfortunes by all and sundry people I met on the way.]

Finally I reached the blessed place called Chitrakoot (which is a forested and hilly terrain where Lord Ram had spent a substantial time of his forest sojourn, and which is a serene and tranquil place for worship and meditation). I found a peaceful environment here, and because of its auspicious and blessed aura I began to see through the wickedness of Kaliyug (*citrakūṭa gayē haurṁ lakhi kalikī kucāli saba*)⁵.

[⁵It is believed that Lord Ram, when he had stayed here, had blessed this place that its environment would be eternally protected from evil and sinful influences of all kinds. Those who would live here would be free from worldly delusions and miseries, and it would be easy to attain spiritual goals by doing meditation, contemplation, penances and austerities here. So great sages and hermits made Chitrakoot their chosen place of residence, and some established hermitages around it. The place was calm and serene and conducive for spiritual practices.

Hence, when Tulsidas reached there during his wanderings, he discovered great mental peace and calmness that he was searching for so long. Since this place was blessed, it had a holy aura about it, and Tulsidas found that all his emotional sufferings have subsided. Here he found good company in the form of like-minded saints and sages, and so he could concentrate his mind peacefully on meditating and contemplating on Lord Ram, free from the disturbances and chaos created by worldly people that had been the cause of so much heart-burn for him till that time.]

I am getting scared of my own self because now I have discovered how tainted, evil and bad I have become (aba apaḍarani ḍaraîō haum̃)⁶.

[⁶Earlier I was surrounded by evil and pervert people, so I could not see much difference between myself and the surrounding world. In fact, I thought that I was far better than the rest. But now when I reached Chitrakoot and saw the saints and sages living here, the contrast became exceedingly sharp. Woe to me and my misfortune! What have I done to myself! Why, I was so happy and blissful in the beginning, and look what ruinous state of affairs I have created for myself!] (3).

Tulsidas says—‘I stand humbly with a bowed head before my Lord Ram to tell him to be cautious (mātha nā'i nātha sōm kahaum̃, hātha jōri kharaîō haum̃), because when a thief (here referring to Kaliyug) is recognised and singled out publicly he becomes very dangerous, and usually he would kill his identifier (in revenge), which in this case is Tulsidas (cīnhōm̃ cōra jiya mārihai tulasī). Having warned the Lord to be cautious and having made my submissions (prayers) before him, I shall now become free from all worries (sō kathā suni prabhusōṅgudari nibaraîō haum̃)⁷.’

[⁷Here, Kaliyug is the thief or the culprit who has been identified by Tulsidas before the king, Lord Ram. So therefore, if the Lord allows Kaliyug to escape punishment, and at the same time if he does not extend an umbrella of protection for Tulsidas and warn Kaliyug to leave him alone for otherwise he would be severely taken to task, it is certain that Kaliyug would take revenge upon Tulsidas and wreak havoc on him, most wrathfully and mercilessly. Tulsidas would be tortured and tormented by Kaliyug in a far worse manner than what he was subjected till now.

Tulsidas says that after having presented his case before Lord Ram he is now at ease for he knows, and is confident, that the Lord would take note of everything he has said. Kaliyug would get his dues, and the Lord would forgive Tulsidas for all his misdemeanours because now he would know who the real culprit is. The Lord is so merciful that he might take pity on Kaliyug and spare him the rod that he actually deserves, but it is also sure that Tulsidas would be redeemed and rehabilitated, and that Kaliyug would be sternly warned not to disturb him any more.] (4).

[Note—Refer also to verse nos. 139, 173, 184, 194, 195(2), 220-221, 265 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ that also describes the evil nature of Kaliyug.]

Tulasīdās' Satyāgraha' (determination/vows)

(267)

पन करि हौं हठि आजुतें रामद्वार पस्थो हौं ।
 ‘तू मेरो’ यह बिन कहे उठिहौं न जनम भरि, प्रभुकी सौं करि निबस्थो हौं ॥1॥
 दै दै धक्का जमभट थके, टारे न टस्थो हौं ।
 उदरदुसह सौंसति सही बहुबार जनमिजग, नरक निदरि निकस्थो हौं ॥2॥
 हौं मचला लै छाड़िहौं, जेहि लागि अस्थो हौं ।
 तुम दयालु, बनिहै दिये, बलि, बिलैंब न कीजिये, जात गलानि गस्थो हौं ॥3॥
 प्रगट कहत जो सकुचिये, अपराध-भस्थो हौं ।
 तौ मनमें अपनाइये, तुलसीहि कृपा करि, कलि बिलोकिं हहस्थो हौं ॥4॥

(267)

pana kari hauṁ haṭhi ājutēm rāmadvāra paraīō hauṁ.

‘tū mērō’ yaha bina kahē uṭhihauṁ na janama bhari, prabhukī sauṁ kari nibaraīō hauṁ. 1.

dai dai dhakkā jamabhaṭa thakē, ṭārē na ṭaraīō hauṁ.

udaradusaha sāmśati sahī bahubāra janamijaga, naraka nidari nikaraīō hauṁ. 2.

hauṁ macalā lai chāḍihauṁ, jēhi lāgi araīō hauṁ.

tuma dayālu, banihai diyē, bali, bilambā na kijiyē, jāta galāni garaīō hauṁ. 3.

pragaṭa kahata jō sakuciyē, aparādha-bharaīō hauṁ.

tau manamēm apanā’iyē, tulasīhi kṛpā kari, kali bilōkim haharaīō hauṁ. 4.

Verse no. 267—Oh Lord Sri Ram! From today onwards, I have firmly resolved to lie (or squat) at your door and shall not move from here unless my demands are met (pana kari hauṁ haṭhi ājutēm rāmadvāra paraīō hauṁ).

Till the moment you pronounce ‘you are mine’¹, I shall not budge from this place for the rest of my life—I declare my intentions openly with you as a witness (so that you cannot deny that you were unaware of it) (‘tū mērō’ yaha bina kahē uṭhihauṁ na janama bhari, prabhukī sauṁ kari nibaraīō hauṁ)¹.

[¹Refer also to verse nos. 250, stanza no. 4, and verse no. 253, stanza no. 3 on this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ in this context.] (1).

[Oh Lord, do not be under the impression that you can push me out using force of your royal guards because—] The messengers of Yam (the God of death and hell) tried to eject me (or push me out) from the front of hell's door, and they become tired of pushing and shoving me but were unable to do it (dai dai dhakkā jamabhaṭa thakē, ṭārē na ṭaraīō hauṁ)².

[²You know why? Because my sins, evil deeds and unrighteousness were so immense that just by the virtue of their weight I managed to hold my ground at Yam’s place. To wit, I spent many births in hell and Yam was unable to get rid of me. In brief, I am a very stubborn sort of man; if Yam and his messengers, who are known to be cruel and merciless in their dealings with creatures, could not push me out from the hell’s door, say how would you push me out against my will as you are so merciful and kind that you would never ever think of employing brute force upon me just for the sake of pushing me out of your door.]

After taking repeated births in this world and suffering the intolerable miseries and excessive torments of the mother's womb which is like a physical form of hell, I became so horrified and disgusted that at last I gave up my stubbornness and voluntarily came out of that hell (udaradusaha sāmśati sahī bahubāra janamijaga, naraka nidari nikaraīō hauṁ)³.

[³Tulsidas compares the sufferings endured by a creature while it is still inside the mother’s womb to that of hell. He says that he left that hell only when he decided to do so as he was horrified by it, and not because Yam was able to eject him. But Lord Ram’s place is so pleasant and heaven-like, and therefore unless the Lord

promises to grant Tulsidas his wishes, he will continue to lay sieze of it and enjoy lying there in comfort.] (2).

I shall certainly obtain that thing which I have determined to get, and I am so obstinate that nothing would change my position and I will not forgo my demands (haurṁ macalā lai chāḍihaurṁ, jēhi lāgi araīō haurṁ). For in all sooth, oh Lord, you are so kind and gracious that after a certain point you will become mellowed and yield to me and agree to provide me what I have set out to obtain (tuma dayālu, banihai diyē).

This being the case (that ultimately you would yield and grant me what I want to have), I invoke your merciful and gracious nature, and prithee (bali) that it is wiser and prudent for you to do it quickly, and sooner the better because I am feeling very guilty and self-conscious for causing so much embarrassment to you (bilambā na kījiyē, jāta galāni garaīō haurṁ)⁴.

[⁴Lord, I do not willingly want to put you in an embarrassing situation by continuing to lie at your doorstep with my demands. I am almost dying of regret and remorse for my actions as they are causing so much discomfort to you, but if I don't do it you will not heed my request. See, I am like a child before you, and a parent must deal kindly and lovingly with his stubborn child who wants nothing else but such a simple thing as his father placing his hand of blessing over the child's head.

Think, what will the world and those who see me lying at your doorstep with my demands unfulfilled say about you? You have a grand reputation as the Lord who fulfils all the wishes of everyone who come to you seeking something, and here I am praying and beseeching you for so long for a simple thing—a mere acceptance of me as your servant—and still I am being denied this request. Say oh Lord, how will you answer this, and say how will you protect your own fame and reputation if you do not heed my prayers and force me to squat at your door for long? So it is best for you to tell me that you have acceded my demands so that I get up, bow reverentially before you, and leave this place happily to go out and sing your glories and praise your benevolent nature for all to listen in this world. Accepting my demands would bring laurels to you.

But in case you don't listen, then let me warn you that the people would say that so many days have passed since Tulsidas has been praying at the door of Lord Ram, and look at his Lord—he is so stone-hearted that he doesn't bother about his devotee's sufferings and has been deaf to his pleas. This would undermine your whole reputation and glories. This is the cause of my remorse, sullenness and lamentation for I don't want you to be embarrassed. So, you had better say once 'Tulsidas, you are mine', and I shall end this non-violent protest instantly!] (3).

Oh Lord, I accept that I am full of faults and unrighteousness, that I am sinful and full of vices, that there is nothing worthy in me to make me acceptable to you openly. And perhaps this is the reason why you are feeling shy and hesitant to openly accept me (pragaṭa kahata jō sakuciye, aparādha-bharaīō haurṁ).

If this is the case then you need not say this in public that you have accepted me; just be kind to accept Tulsidas as one of your own in your heart (tau manamēṁ apanā'iyē, tulasīhi kṛpā kari).

But be kind enough to give me a subtle hint that you have accepted me internally though you don't wish to say it out in the open. It would serve my purpose, because I am terrified of Kaliyug and want assurance from you (that you are my Lord

and guardian, and so I need not be afraid from anyone) (kali bilōkim haharāiō haum̐) (4).

How will I know that Lord Śrī Rāma has accepted me?

(268)

तुम अपनायो तब जानिहौं, जब मन फिरि परिहै ।
 जेहि सुभाव बिषयनि लग्यो, तेहि सहजनाथ सों नेह छाड़ि छल करिहै ॥1॥
 सुतकी प्रीति, प्रतीति मीतकी, नृप ज्यों डर डरिहै ।
 अपनो सो स्वारथ स्वामिसों, चहुँ विधिचातक ज्यों एकटेकतेनहिंटरिहै ॥2॥
 हरषिहै न अति आदरे, निदरे न जरि मरिहै ।
 हानिलाभ दुखसुख सबै समचितहित अनहित, कलि-कुचलि परिहरिहै ॥3॥
 प्रभु-गुन सुनि मन हरषिहै, नीर नयननि ढरिहै ।
 तुलसीदास भयो रामको, बिस्वास, प्रेम लखि आनंद उमगि उर भरिहै ॥4॥

(268)

tuma apanāyō taba jānihaum̐, jaba mana phiri parihai.
 jēhi subhāva biṣayani lagyō, tēhi sahaajanātha sōm nēha chāḍi
 chala karihai. 1.
 sutakī prīti, pratīti mītakī, nṛpa jyōm̐ ḍara ḍarihai.
 apanō sō svāratha svāmisōm̐, cahum̐ vidhicātaka jyōm̐ ēkaṭēkatē
 nahiṇ ṭarihai. 2.
 haraṣihai na ati ādarē, nidarē na jari marihai.
 hānilābha dukhasukha sabai samacitahita anahita, kali-kucali
 pariharihai. 3.
 prabhu-guna suni mana haraṣihai, nīra nayanani ḍarihai.
 tulasīdāsa bhayō rāmakō, bisvāsa, prēma lakhi ānam̐da umagi
 ura bharihai. 4.

Verse no. 268—In the previous verse no. 267 we have read that Tulsidas urges Lord Ram to accept him no matter how bad and unworthy he may be for it. He has also asked the Lord not to feel embarrassed if by publicly declaring that he has accepted such a sinful and evil man as Tulsidas makes him feel so, but it would be alright if the Lord silently accepts in his heart that Tulsidas is his devotee. But then, in the latter case, how will Tulsidas know that he has been accepted by the Lord and that the Lord has forgiven him for his past misdemeanours? This verse answers this question.]

When my Mana (the ‘mind’ with its various components such as sub-conscious, thoughts, intellect, discriminatory powers, perceptions, et al, and the ‘heart’ with its emotions, sentiments etc.) turns towards you (and away from the world) (jaba mana phiri parihai), then only will I be satisfied that you have truly accepted me and are pleased with me (tuma apanāyō taba jānihaum̐).

When my Mana abandons all its trickery, deceptions and pretensions (*chāḍi chala*) to develop true, sincere and natural love and affection for the Lord (Sri Ram) (*tēhi sahanātha sōm nēha karihai*) with the same enthusiasm with which it had been indulgent in gratification of the sense organs and pursuing the pleasures that it got from the world and its sense objects (*jēhi subhāva biṣayani lagyō*)—then only would I think and know that you are pleased with me¹.

[¹To wit, when my Mana turns away from the mundane, delusory, gross temporal world and its countless temptations, when it does not feel the urge to gratify one's sense organs, when the allurements of pleasures and comforts offered by the sense objects of this world lose their charm and appear dull, and instead when it (my Mana) feels attracted towards the Lord, in having devotion, faith, love and affection for the Lord, in serving the Lord with the same enthusiasm with which it had been pursuing the world and got attracted towards its charms—then only will I think that I have been accepted by the Lord and he is pleased with me.

Till the time my Mana finds natural affection for the Lord and has a sincere desire to be devoted to him and enjoy his company, and till the time it loses all interests in the world and desire for self-gratification, how can I believe that the Lord has really accepted me?] (1).

[Further, I can't be assured that you have accepted me unless—] The way my Mana makes me love my son and be attached to him (*sutakī prīti*), the way it makes me believe and have faith in my friends and compatriots (*pratīti mītakī*), and the way it makes me have fear of the king of the realm (*“nrpa jyōm ḍara ḍarihai”*—i.e. makes me obey the king's orders, pay tribute to him, exhibit loyalty and allegiance to him, and seek the king's protection and patronage)—when it (the Mana) has developed a similar sort of affection, faith, reliance and loyalty towards the Lord (Sri Ram), when it determines that all its interests and well-being are centered in the Lord (*apanō sō svāratha svāmisōm*), and when it is steadfast in this vow and never ever gets distracted from its chosen path (*nahiṇ ṭarihai*) much like the bird Chatak that keeps its gaze fixed on its target (*cahum̐ vidhicātaka jyōm ēkaṭēkatē*)²—it is only then that I would be satisfied and know that the Lord has accepted me.

[²The bird Chatak is said to have taken a vow that it would drink drops of rainwater which the cloud puts directly into its beak, or otherwise it would prefer to die of thirst, so enamoured it is with the dark rain-bearing cloud. Tulsidas cites this example to emphasise that when his mind and heart have firmly decided that he should not seek anything from anyone except his beloved Lord Ram, when he is able to develop natural love and affection for his Lord, and when the Lord also reciprocates his emotions and pays respect to his sentiments by overlooking all his shortcomings and embracing him irrespective of how he is—then only would Tulsidas understand that Lord Ram is pleased with him and has unequivocally accepted him.] (2).

[Again, only when the following conditions or characteristics evolve in me shall I consider myself as having been accepted by Lord Sri Ram—] When it (the Mana) develops the highest level of equanimity and calmness by neither feeling exhilarated and excited on getting the highest honour in this world (*haraṣihai na ati ādarē*), nor dying of burns inflicted by the fire ignited by insults, humiliation or rebuke in it (*“nidarē na jari marihai”*—i.e. when it does not get angry and vengeful in spite of the greatest of provocations), when it is able to remain calm, poised, unruffled,

uniform, unwavering, stable and tranquil under contradictory situations, such as profit and loss, joys and sorrows, fortunes and misfortunes, adversities and favourable conditions, and all other sorts of paradoxes and complex circumstances that are hallmarks of life in this world (*hānilābha dukhasukha sabai samacitahita anahita*), and when it completely abandons its involvement with all the deceitful, treacherous, evil, sinful, pervert, decadent, unrighteous, unscrupulous and detestable ways of Kaliyug (*kali-kucali pariharihai*)—then only will I be satisfied and know that I have been accepted by the Lord and he is pleased with me (3).

[Other virtues that would define my acceptance by Lord Ram are the following—] When my Mana shall become ecstatic with joy on hearing about the fame, glories and virtues of the Lord (Sri Ram) (*prabhu-guna suni mana haraṣihai*), and a stream of affectionate tears would roll down my eyes (*nīra nayanani ḍharihai*)—then only will Tulsidas believe that he has become one of Lord Sri Ram's own devotees (*tulasīdāsa bhayō rāmakō, bisvāsa*).

And when this realisation dawns in Tulsidas' mind, he would be overwhelmed by surging waves of love and affection for Lord Ram that would emerge in his ecstatic heart; he would be extremely delighted and euphoric, and his heart would erupt in joy (*prēma lakhi ānamḍa umagi ura bharihai*). [Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to make this thing a reality.] (4).

How much love should I have for Lord Rāma

(269)

राम कबहुँ प्रिय लागिहौ जैसे नीर मीनको?
सुख जीवन ज्यों जीवको, मनि ज्यों फनिको हित, ज्यों धन लोभ-लीनको॥१॥
ज्यों सुभाय प्रिय लगति नागरी नागर नवीनको।
त्यों मेरे मन लालसा करिये करुनाकर! पावन प्रेम पीनको॥२॥
मनसाको दाता कहैं श्रुति प्रभु प्रवीनको।
तुलसिदास को भावतो, बलि जाउँ दयानिधि! दीजै दान दीनको॥३॥

(269)

rāma kabahum' priya lāgihau jaisē nīra mīnakō?
sukha jīvana jyōm' jīvakō, mani jyōm' phanikō hita, jyōm' dhana
lōbha-līnakō. 1.
jyōm' subhāya priya lagati nāgarī nāgara navīnakō.
tyōm' mērē mana lālasā kariyē karunākara! pāvana prēma
pīnakō. 2.
manasākō dātā kahaim' śruti prabhu pravīnakō.
tulasidāsa kō bhāvatō, bali jā'um' dayānidhi! dījai dāna
dīnakō. 3.

Verse no. 269—Oh Lord Sri Ram! Will I ever have as much affection, love and endearment for you (a) as the fish has for the water ("kabahum' priya lāgihau jaisē

nīra mīnakō”; the fish cannot survive detached from the water), (b) as the creature loves a life of comfort and happiness (“sukha jīvana jyōm jīvakō”; the creature tries all dirty tricks to get comfort and happiness in life), (c) as the serpent loves the ‘Mani’ (“mani jyōm phanikō hita”; the Mani is a luminiscent sac formed by secretions from the glands on the hood of a special type of snake; if the sac is removed it is said that the snake dies), and (d) as a great greedy miser loves his wealth (“jyōm dhana lōbha-līnakō”; for a miser, everything else in the world is secondary as compared to his pennies) (1).

Or else, even as a young actor is naturally attracted towards a young, clever and beautiful actress (jyōm subhāya priya lagati nāgarī nāgara navīnakō), oh Lord who shows mercy and compassion (karunākara), please produce (or develop) in my mind and heart (i.e. my inner-self) an intense desire (tyōm mērē mana lālasā kariyē) for drinking the nectar symbolised by having exclusive love and devotion for you that is of the purest kind, that is intense, truthful, steady, abiding and eternal by its inherent nature (pāvana prēma pīnakō). [Oh Lord, let it be so that I love and have affection for no one else except you; let me be devoted to you and no one else.] (2).

The Vedas assert (kahairṁ śruti) that the Lord fulfills all the wishes and desires (that arise in the heart of his devotees and those who come to him seeking something—“manasākō dātā”), and that the Lord is very clever and proficient towards that end (prabhu pravīnakō). [That is, the Lord understands one's needs and desires even without speaking or asking for them specifically. So the Lord fulfills them on his own by merely approaching the Lord and submitting one's self before the Lord.]

Oh an abode of mercy, compassion, kindness and grace (dayānidhi)! I earnestly beseech you, I sincerely plead before you (bali jā'umṁ) to give as alms the things which Tulsidas wishes in his heart (tulasidāsa kō bhāvatō, dījai dāna dīnakō). [And, what does he want? For an answer, refer verse nos. 267, 268 among others. In brief, Tulsidas wants nothing else but to have everlasting love and devotion for Lord Ram and faith in the Lord's holy name.] (4).

Lord Śrī Rāma, will you?

(270)

कबहुँ कृपा करि रघुबीर! मोहू चितैहो ।
 भलो—बुरो जन आपनो, जिय जानिदयानिधि! अवगुन अमित बितैहो ॥1॥
 जनम जनम हौं मन जित्यो, अब मोहि जितैहो ।
 हौं सनाथ हैहौ सही, तुमहू अनाथपति, जो लघुतहि न भितैहो ॥2॥
 बिनय करौ अपभयहु ते, तुम्ह परम हितै हो ।
 तुलसिदास कासों कहै, तुमही सब मेरे, प्रभु—गुरु, मातु—पितै हो ॥3॥

(270)

kabahuṁ kṛpā kari raghubīra! mōhū citaiho.
 bhalō-burō jana āpanō, jiya jāni dayānidhi! avaguna amita

bitaihō. 1.

janama janama haurṁ mana jityō, aba mōhi jitaihō.
haurṁ sanātha hvaihau sahī, tumahū anāthapati, jō laghutahi na
bhitaihō. 2.

binaya karaurṁ apabhayahu tēm, tumha parama hitai hō.
tulasidāsa kāsōm kahai, tumahī saba mērē, prabhu-guru,
mātu-pitai hō. 3.

Verse no. 270—Oh Lord Raghubīra (Sri Ram)! Will you be ever kind enough to glance (or look) at me affectionately (*kabahum̐ kṛpā kari mōhū citaihō*)?

Oh Lord who is an abode of kindness and mercy (*dayānidhi*)! Considering this fact about me in your heart (*jiya jāni*) that ‘whatever sort of person this fellow is, whether he is good or bad, he is nevertheless mine, he is my follower, servant and dependant’ (*bhalō-burō jana āpanō*), will you please have mercy on me and end my faults, shortcomings, vices, taints and blemishes (*avaguna amita bitaihō*)¹?

[¹Oh Lord, please regard me as your devotee and servant who is totally dependent upon your grace and mercy. I don’t say that I am good and worthy of you, but it is also not deniable that I have no one whom I can call ‘mine’ except you. So oh Lord, please be kind on me, purify me and cleanse me of all my faults and vices that have tainted my character for so long, so that I become fit to be called your devotee.] (1).

In all my previous births, this Mana (mind and heart) of mine had the better of me as its always had been able to subdue me so much that I fell prey to its nefarious designs, and under its instructions I got indulgent in the world and its sense objects (as I was subservient to this Mana) (*janama janama haurṁ mana jityō*).

Now tell me Lord, will you please make me win over it (my powerful Mana that is my biggest enemy) in this life (*aba mōhi jitaihō*)? [To wit, will you make it happen that in this life my Mana would listen to me and become devoted to you? Will you prevail upon this Mana of mine so that it helps me to have affection for you and worship your holy feet?]

This will benefit us both. On the one hand it is true that I would be blessed and fulfilled (and would therefore be obliged and thankful to you forever) (*haurṁ sanātha hvaihau sahī*), and on the other hand you would also be able to retain your reputation and get immense fame and honour for being the benevolent and merciful Lord who patronises and provides solace and succour to all those who have no one over their head to take care of them, who are helpless and hapless (*tumahū anāthapati*), if you were to overlook my shortcomings and faults and accept me (*jō laghutahi na bhitaihō*) (2).

I am pleading with you in such a humble way because I am very nervous, distressed and scared stiff about my fate and the precarious circumstances that I find myself in (*binaya karaurṁ apabhayahu tēm*). You are certainly my best benefactor and well-wisher (*tumha parama hitai hō*).

So oh Lord, whom else should Tulsidas go to pray to and plead his case with; from whom else should I expect help, mercy, solace and succour (*tulasidāsa kāsōm kahai*), because for me, you are my only Lord, you are my only Guru (teacher, guide

and moral preceptor), you are my only parent, both as a mother as well as a father, and whatever other affectionate relationships that may exist in this world (tumahī saba mērē, prabhu-guru, mātu-pitai hō) (3).

[Note—Refer also to verse no. 211 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ which also deals with a similar theme.]

Tulasīdāsa beseeches his Lord Rām to accept him

(271)

जैसो हौं तैसो राम रावरो जन, जनि परिहरिये।
 कृपासिंधु, कोसलधनी! सरनागत—पालक, ढरनि आपनी ढरिये॥1॥
 हौं तौ बिगरायल और को, बिगरो न बिगरिये।
 तुम सुधारि आये सदा सबकी सबही बिधि, अब मेरियो सुधरिये॥2॥
 जग हँसिहै मेरे संग्रहे, कत इहि डर डरिये।
 कपि—केवट कीन्है सखा जेहिसील, सरल चित, तेहि सुभाउ अनुसरिये॥3॥
 अपराधी तउ आपनो, तुलसी न बिसरिये।
 टूटियो बाँह गरे परै, फूटेहु बिलोचन पीर होत हित करिये॥4॥

(271)

jaisō haum̐ taisō rāma rāvarō jana, jani parihariyē.
 kṛpāsindhu, kōsaladhanī! saranāgata-pālaka, ḍharani āpanī ḍhariyē. 1.
 haum̐ tau bigarāyala aura kō, bigarō na bigariyē.
 tuma sudhāri āyē sadā sabakī sabahī bidhi, aba mēriyō sudhariyē. 2.
 jaga hamśihai mērē saṅgrahē, kata ihi ḍara ḍariyē.
 kapi-kēvaṭa kīnhē sakhā jēhisīla, sarala cita, tēhi subhā'u anusariyē. 3.
 aparādhī ta'u āpanō, tulasī na bisariyē.
 ṭūṭiyō bām̐ha garē parai, phūṭēhu bilōcana pīra hōta hita kariyē. 4.

Verse no. 271—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! No matter what sort of a person I may be (whether I am good or bad), but I am your majesty's (humble, faithful and devoted) servant (devotee, follower) (jaisō haum̐ taisō rāvarō jana)—so keeping this in mind, don't abandon or forsake me (jani parihariyē)¹.

[¹To wit, I don't say that I am an excellent and qualified devotee or servant or follower of yours, but nevertheless it can't be denied either that you are my only Lord and I am faithful and devoted to you, I have affection for you. So you must always keep this fact in mind when deciding how to deal with me, for Lord I have no where else to go.]

Oh the Lord of Kaushal (Ayodhya) (kōsaladhanī)! You are an ocean of mercy, grace, kindness and compassion (kṛpāsindhu), and a care-taker and sustainer of your refugees (saranāgata-pālaka). I pray that you must always follow the tradition established by your own majesty and be vigilant towards your grand

reputation of the Lord who is beneficent and benevolent towards all those who have taken shelter and refuge with you, and who seek your grace, kindness, mercy and compassion from your highness (ḍharani āpanī ḍhariyē) (1).

I and my fate are already ruined by others (i.e. by the countless shortcomings and faults that I have, such as passion, lust, greed, attachments, arrogance, pride, deceit, falsehood, pretensions, deception etc.) (hauṁ tau bigarāyala aura kō), so please don't do anything to ruin them further (by not accepting me as a refugee at your holy feet and turning me away) (bigarō na bigariyē).

Verily and in all sooth oh Lord, you have always been most benevolent, kind, graceful and magnanimous towards all, and you have always mended the fate of all in every possible and imaginable way (tuma sudhāri āyē sadā sabakī sabahī bidhi). So please show the same grace upon me, and mend me and my fate in the same way (aba mēriyō sudhariyē)².

[²To wit, all those who had ruined their fate by being evil, unrighteous and unscrupulous have had their fate mended when they came and surrendered before you. All of them were given freedom from worries and miseries; all of them were granted liberation and deliverance. Now it is my turn to get the same blessing from you.] (2).

Why are you afraid that the world will laugh (ridicule, mock or scorn) at you for having accepted me (because I am an unworthy fellow who does not deserve to be shown the honour of being put in the same line as the rest of your blessed devotees)? (jaga haṁśihai mērē saṅgrahē, kata ihi ḍara ḍariyē)³.

[³You shouldn't be worried or feel shy about what the world would say if you accept me, though I am a very evil and sinful man not worthy to be your servant, follower or devotee, for you are well-known to be a Lord who willingly and cheerfully accepts all those who are sinful and fallen, all those who have been rejected by other and have nowhere to go. Then you gladly provide them with solace and succour; you give them protection and liberation from their worries and miseries. Oh Lord, this is precisely why you are so famous and respected in this world—it is your wont, it is your promise, a word of honour and a pledge that you've made yourself that anyone who comes to your door seeking mercy and succour is always shown respect and obliged with fulfilment of his wishes. No one goes empty-handed from your doorstep. So why would you deny me this privilege?]

Treat me in the same way as you had befriended the monkeys (of Kishkindha, including Sugriv, Angad, Hanuman etc.) and the boatman (who took Lord Ram, his wife Sita and brother Laxmana across the river Ganges when the Lord was on his way to the forest from Ayodhya) with courtesy, politeness and simplicity (kapi-kēvaṭa kīnhē sakhā jēhisīla, sarala cita, tēhi subhā'u anusariyē)⁴.

[⁴Lord Ram had treated all of them like his own brothers though they were lowly by birth and unfit to be raised to a high stature that was equivalent to being a kith and kin of Lord Ram. The Lord had not paid attention to their caste, race, vices, sins or misdemeanours while cheerfully embracing them and blessing them. Tulsidas argues that if they can be accepted by the Lord so courteously and with a friendly

disposition, then why should he be not; why should he not accept the same treatment for himself.] (3).

Though I am a culprit, but after all I am yours (*aparādhī ta'u āpanō*). [You cannot deny this relationship.] Therefore, you must not forget this humble fellow called Tulsidas (*tulasī na bisariyē*).

When one's hand gets fractured (or diseased in some way), it is tied to one's neck by using a sling (and not cut-off from the body and thrown away to get rid of the nuisance) (*tūṭiyō bām̐ha garē parai*).

Similarly, when a person's eye that is already blind (and therefore useless for him) starts hurting in some way, he tries his best to take care of it (*phūṭēhu bilōcana pīra hōta hita kariyē*). [To wit, although this eye is useless for him, he never neglects it or tries to pull it out and throw it away as a cause of nuisance.]⁵

[⁵Tulsidas cites these two stunning examples to stress upon Lord Ram that one cannot just pick up and non-chalantly throw away anything that is very dear and close to him and a part of his life though that particular thing is more of a nuisance than being of any good to the person—just like the case of broken hand or the blind eye that cannot be thrown away by anyone though they are of no use to him and create more problems to him than of being any help.

Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram that the Lord should accept him inspite of all his drawbacks and shortcomings simply because he is a devotee and a servant of the Lord, and therefore a part of his lineage of followers and devotees who deserve special treatment at the hands of the Lord just like a patriarch who has to take care of all the members of his extended household no matter how evil and mischievous they may be.] (4).

[Note—Refer also to verse no. 153 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' in this context.]

Tulasīdāsa pleads with Lord Śrī Rāma not to procrastinate further in extending grace and protection to him

(272)

तुम जनि मन मैलो करो, लोचन जनि फेरो ।
 सुनहु राम! बिनु रावरे लोकहु परलोकहु कोउ न कहूँ हितु मेरो ॥1॥
 अगुन—अलायक—आलसी जानि अधम अनेरो ।
 स्वास्थके साथिन्ह तज्यो तिजराको—सो टोटक, औचट उलटि न हेरो ॥2॥
 भगतिहीन, बेद—बाहिरो लखि कलिमल घेरो ।
 देवनिहू देव! परिहस्यो, अन्याव न तिनको, हाँ अपराधी सब केरो ॥3॥
 नामकी ओट पेट भरत हौं, पै कहावत चेरो ।
 जगत—बिदित बात है परी, समुझिये धौं अपने, लोक कि बेद बडेरो ॥4॥
 है है जब—तब तुम्हहिं तैं तुलसीको भलेरो ।
 दिन—हू—दिन बिगरि है, बलि जाउँ, बिलंब किये, अपनाइये सबेरो ॥5॥

(272)

tuma jani mana mailō karō, lōcana jani phērō.
 sunahu rāma! binu rāvarē lōkahu paralōkahu kō'u na kahūm' hitu mērō. 1.
 aguna-alāyaka-ālasī jāni adhama anērō.
 svārathakē sāthinha tajyō tijarākō-sō tōṭaka, aucaṭa ulaṭi na hērō. 2.
 bhagatihīna, bēda-bāhirō lakhi kalimala ghērō.
 dēvanihū dēva! pariharañō, an'yāva na tinakō, haum aparādhī saba kērō. 3.
 nāmakī oṭa pēṭa bharata haum, pai kahāvata cērō.
 jagata-bidita bāta hvai parī, samujhiyē dhauri apanē, lōka ki bēda baṛērō. 4.
 hvai hai jaba-tabā tumhahim tēm tulasikō bhalērō.
 dina-hū-dina bigari hai, bali jā'um, bilamba kiyē, apanā'iyē sabērō. 5.

Verse no. 272—Oh Lord Sri Ram! Please do not bring any kind of ill-feeling or prejudice in your mind against me (tuma jani mana mailō karō), and please don't turn your benevolent sight away from me (lōcana jani phērō)¹.

[¹To wit, Lord, don't be angry at me simply because I am a culprit and sinful, nor should you turn away your sight from me to gesture that you are no longer interested in me.]

Oh Lord Ram, listen (sunahu rāma)! I say in all sooth and without the least gainsay that in this world as well as in the next (after death), there is no one besides your majesty who can take care of my welfare and well-being, there is no one except you who would redeem me, there is no one whom I can rely upon and claim to be my best friend, well-wisher and kith and kin (binu rāvarē lōkahu paralōkahu kō'u na kahūm' hitu mērō) (for I have repeatedly said and affirmed that Lord Ram is my only Lord and Guardian in this life as well in the life hereafter) (1).

Considering me (jāni) to be worthless person who is devoid of any worthwhile virtues, qualities and character (aguna), of being so unfit and incompetent that I was of no use or value to any one of them (alāyaka), of being lazy, indolent, slothful and lethargic (ālasī), of being naïve, lowly, mean, impoverished and useless for all practical purposes (adhama anērō)—all worldly companions and relations of mine who were selfish and kept their contact with me only as long as I could serve their vested interests (but in whom I had so much faith, upon whom I had relied upon, had affection for, and had thought to be my friends and comrades) have abandoned me, have forsaken and forgotten all about me (svārathakē sāthinha tajyō) like someone discarding a treasury-chest if it is said to be cursed and keeping it would bring bad omen to the owner (tijarākō-sō tōṭaka)².

They lost complete interest in me and washed their hands clean of me so much so that they never bothered to turn back to cast even as much as a glance to see if I was alright or suffering (aucaṭa ulaṭi na hērō)³.

[²The phrase used in the text is “tijarākō-sō tōṭaka”. The word “tijarākō” refers to something that is related to a chest or vault where valuables are kept, and the word “tōṭaka” means a magical charm consisting of mysterious rituals and chantings that are used in occult practices to attain some objective.

Here Tulsidas invokes this practice to observe that when his worldly companions failed to extract some service from him and keep him in their fold inspite of their trying all sorts of odd means to distract him from his chosen path of serving Lord Ram and offering his life and time exclusively to the Lord, they lost complete interest in him. So now onwards, Tulsidas was left with only one companion—and he was Lord Ram. The saint urges the Lord to take pity on him as he has sacrificed all his worldly relations for the sake of the Lord, and if now the Lord does not warmly embrace him and include him in the fellowship of his devotees, then one can just imagine the precarious condition in which Tulsidas would be left to face his destiny. It's alright for him if the Lord so wills because Tulsidas would accept what the Lord wishes, but would neglecting Tulsidas who has completely offered himself to the Lord go down well for the Lord himself and behave good for his reputation and majesty, will the Lord find peace if he does so? Surely and certainly the answer is an unequivocal 'no'!

³Everyone in this world pretended to be my friend and kith and kin as long as I was of some use to them. But once they discovered that I would be of no worldly use to them because of my determination to serve Lord Ram and no one else, suddenly they turned their faces away from me and abandoned me as if I was a plague for their well-being; they had nothing to do with me.] (2).

Oh Lord (dēva), what to talk of selfish worldly people, even the Gods (had no mercy on me as they) have abandoned me (dēvaniḥū pariharaîō) and care not for my well-being when they found out that I lacked devotion for them, I did not offer worship to them (for now I am devoted and worship Lord Ram exclusively) (bhagatihīna), that I had deviated from the orthodox religious path prescribed by the Vedas (for I did not chant their texts, nor did I follow the various rites, performed the many sacrifices and observed the sacraments prescribed by them) (bēda-bāhirō), and that I was surrounded by all the evil and sinful characters so characteristic of Kaliyug (i.e. I was not pious, righteous and holy, I was sinful and overcome with countless faults of character and moral so typical of the present corrupt era known as Kaliyug) (lakhi kalimala ghērō).

Verily indeed, they had not been unjustified in their actions (an'yāva na tinakō) because I am not worthy of them and have virtually offended them by going against their wishes and choosing an independent path for myself and my destiny (which of course they won't like to happen) (hauṁ aparādhī saba kērō)⁴.

[⁴Obviously, the Gods would have expected me to pay obeisance to them, to offer them sacrifices and affirm my allegiance to them. But I didn't. I chose Lord Ram instead. So they got annoyed with me. Oh Lord Ram, where will I go if you too disown me?] (3).

I have been taking your name only to fill my stomach ("nāmakī ōṭa pēṭa bharata hauṁ"—i.e., I hide behind the garb of being your devotee by chanting your holy name, pretending to be your ardent disciple, devotee and follower just for the sake of quelling my hunger as people would give me alms as charity, thinking me to be a saintly person).

Just by this simple ruse I have become famous in this world (jagata-bidita bāta hvai parī), and it recognises me as a saintly and pious person who is devoted to Lord Ram (whom the world knows to be a personified form of the Supreme Being himself) (pai kahāvata cērō)⁵.

[⁵To wit, the world gives me respect just for this simple reason that I chant your name loudly without much exertion on my part and without having to be careful about any formal way to do it as your holy name can be repeated in any way one finds convenient.]

Now Lord think over it yourself (*samujhiyē dhaum̐ apanē*): Which of the two is of a greater importance and more significant (as a witness on my behalf), the World or the Vedas (*lōka ki bēda barērō*)⁶?

[⁶If one relies only on the opinion of the Vedas, i.e. the ancient scriptures which have limited reach as they are known only to an exclusive group of experts, then by their definition I am not your devotee. But if one takes into consideration the opinion of the World with its vast population which openly acknowledges and vouches for me when it declares that I am your disciple and follower, and by extension a devotee of yours, then you must consider the opinion of the majority that is in my favour, and hence accept me as your disciple, servant, follower and devotee.

To wit, On the one hand there are limited number of Veda experts who will say that I am a fallen man not worthy of redemption since I do not pay my obeisance to either the Gods whom the Vedas expect a man to offer obeisance to nor follow any of the practices prescribed by them, and on the other hand there is the vast population of the World that unanimously proclaims me to be Lord Ram's devotee and servant as I constantly repeat the Lord's holy name—then anyone can easily decide in my favour because I have a large number of witnesses endorsing my claim.

See also verse no. 165, stanza no. 4 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika'.] (4).

It is therefore a forgone conclusion that whenever Tulsidas gets a chance of acquiring any sort of welfare and redemption for himself then it will be only at your (Lord Ram's) hands (*hvai hai jaba-taba tumhahim̐ tēm̐ tulasikō bhalērō*)⁷.

[⁷In the next verse no. 273 we learn why Tulsidas is so urgent in his appeal to Lord Ram to save him and secure his future: it is because this saint-poet had a premonition of his impending death. In verse no. 274 that follows it he conclusively asserts that his solace and succour lies only with Lord Ram.]

I honestly and sincerely submit before you and invoke your merciful nature to say (*bali jā'um̐*) that the more you delay, the more ruinous this poor and wretched fellow's (Tulsidas') fate would be, and it would continue to decline further the more you procrastinate (*dina-hū-dina deva bigari hai*).

The more you delay, the more difficult would it for you to pull me out and redeem me at a later date (so delaying and being indecisive would make no practical sense for your majesty). Hence oh Lord, I prithee that you must accept me forthwith without further procrastination, the ear lier you do so the better for both of us (*bilamba kiyē, apanā'iyē sabērō*)⁸.

[⁸Well, this being the case that at last it is destined and almost certain that you will have to take care of my welfare, well-being and redemption, then you should do it at the earliest—that would be better for both of us.] (5).

Tulasidās' premonition of his impending death

(273)

तुम तजि हौं कासों कहौं, और को हितु मेरे?

दीनबंधु! सेवक—सखा, आरत अनाथपर सहज छोह केहि करे ॥1॥
 बहुत पतित भवनिधि तरे बिनु तरि, बिनु बेरे।
 कृपा—कोप—सतिभायहू, धोखेहु—तिरछेहू, राम! तिहारेहि हेरे ॥2॥
 जो चितवनि सौंधी लगै, चितइये सबेरे।
 तुलसिदास अपनाइये, कीजै न ढील, अब जिवन—अवधि अति नेरे ॥3॥

(273)

tuma taji haur̥m kāsōm̐ kahaum̐, aura kō hitu mērē?
 dīnabandhu! sēvaka-sakhā, ārata anāthapara sahaja chōha kēhi kērē. 1.
 bahuta patita bhavanidhi tarē binu tari, binu bērē.
 kṛpā-kōpa-satibhāyahū, dhōkhēhu-tirachēhū, rāma! tihārēhi hērē. 2.
 jō citavani saundhī lagai, cita'iyē sabērē.
 tulasidāsa apanā'iyē, kījai na ḍhīla, aba jivana-avadhi ati nērē. 3.

Verse no. 273—Oh Lord! Whom else should I tell (about my agonies and sufferings) if I don't tell you (tuma taji haur̥m kāsōm̐ kahaum̐)? Who else is my benefactor and well-wisher (aura kō hitu mērē)?

Oh the friend of the lowly, the meek, the downtrodden, the humble, the wretched and the distressed ones (“dīnabandhu”—a reference to Lord Ram)! Who (else except you) has a natural and habitual tendency of being selflessly merciful, kind, graceful, compassionate and benevolent (sahaja chōha kēhi kērē) towards one's servant and companion (sēvaka-sakhā), towards those who are distressed and in a miserable and pitiful condition (ārata), and those who are distitutes, desolate, helpless, hapless and without any one to take care of them (anāthapara)? (1).

Many a sinners and evil ones had crossed this ocean-like world (bahuta patita bhavanidhi tarē) without any ship or bridge to take them across (binu tari, binu bērē) just because you had glanced at them once (tihārēhi hērē) [To wit, they obtained deliverance and emancipation simply relying upon your grace.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! You had just glanced at them, either done so angrily or gracefully, willingly or inadvertently, scornfully or pleasingly (kṛpā-kōpa-satibhāyahū, dhōkhēhu-tirachēhū), and that was sufficient for them to be liberated from this vicious cycle of birth and death as well as cross this mundane world which is like a vast and intractable ocean (2).

Out of these glances—i.e. whether it be benevolent or malevolent, angry or pleased, munificent or scowling, merciful or cruel, compassionate or scornful and stern—whichever way you deem fit (jō citavani saundhī lagai), look at me as quickly and as soon as you can (cita'iyē sabērē)¹.

[¹To wit, the Lord's glance would be more than enough for me, no matter how the Lord looks towards me. My objective would be served as soon as the Lord glances at me because it would mean that the Lord has at least thought of me once. Further, he is so merciful and kind that as soon as he catches a glimpse of me he will immediately take notice of my pitiful condition, of the fact that I am standing before him with hands held together in prayer and submission. So he would instantly consider my case

and settle my fate then and there. So I am least bothered how Lord Ram glances at me as long as he does it at least once; it would be sufficient to mend my fate for good.]

The thing is oh Lord, please accept Tulsidas as quickly as you can, and please don't be lax or careless in this (tulasidāsa apanā'iyē kījai na ḍhīla) because Tulsidas' lifespan is coming to an end soon (i.e. his death is near at hand, and therefore not much time is left) (aba jivana-avadhi ati nērē)².

[²This last stanza clearly proves that Tulsidas had had a premonition of his approaching death. We must remember that a man approaching a certain death, which is too close to him for comfort, is very honest in whatever he says. This desperation is evident in these verses.] (3).

Lord Śrī Rāma is the only succour and solace

(274)

जाऊँ कहाँ, ठौर है कहाँ देव! दुखित—दीनको?
को कृपालु स्वामी—सारिखो, राखै सरनागत सब अँग बल—बिहीनको।।1।।
गनिहि, गुनिहि साहिब लहै, सेवा समीचीन को।
अधम/अधन अगुन आलसिनको पालिबो फबि आयो रघुनायक नवीनको।।2।।
मुखकै कहा कहाँ, बिदित है जीकी प्रभु प्रवीनको।
तिहू काल, तिहु लोकमें एक टेक रावरी तुलसीसे मन मलीनको।।3।।

(274)

jā'um̐ kahām̐, ṭhaura hai kahām̐ dēva! dukhita-dīnakō?
kō kṛpālu svāmī-sārikhō, rākhai saranāgata saba am̐ga bala-bihīnakō. 1.
ganihi, gunihi sāhiba lahai, sēvā samīcīna kō.
adhama/adhana aguna ālasinakō pālibō phabi āyō raghunāyaka navīnakō. 2.
mukhakai kahā kahaur̐, bidita hai jīkī prabhu prabīnakō.
tihū kāla, tihu lōkamēm̐ ēka ṭeka rāvarī tulasīsē mana malīnakō. 3.

Verse no. 274—Oh Lord (dēva)! Where can I go (to seek solace and succour) (jā'um̐ kahām̐)? Where else can this sorrowful, miserable, distressed, humble and lowly fellow like me ever expect to find any sort of refuge or shelter (except at the holy feet of Lord Ram); what destination do have I except Lord Ram (where I can go to find rest and peace for myself) (ṭhaura hai kahām̐ dukhita-dīnakō)?

Say, who is a more benevolent, munificent, kind, merciful and compassionate Lord than you (kō kṛpālu svāmī-sārikhō) who would cheerfully and willingly accept and give shelter and refuge to those who have no physical strength nor any kind of resource or ability to take care of themselves and their future (and are therefore feeling absolutely helpless and hapless) (rākhai saranāgata saba am̐ga bala-bihīnakō) (1).

Other than you, all other Lords in this world would favour and welcome only those people who are rich, have special skills and qualities, and who can render good service to their masters (ganihi, gunihi sāhiba lahai, sēvā samīcīna kō)¹.

[¹To wit, only Lord Ram is such a selfless Lord that he would willingly accept everyone irrespective of the fact whether or not that person has any good qualities, is of any good to the Lord, and is worthy of the Lord's majesty and reputation. Even the most wretched, lowly, distressed and good-for-nothing creature is welcomed affectionately by the Lord. The only criterion that Lord Ram has is the level and truthfulness of devotion, faith, affection, honesty and sincerity that the person has when he submits himself before the Lord seeking his grace and mercy. Pretensions and trickery are absolutely abhorred by the Lord.

Refer also to verse nos. 163, 216, 229, 249, 264 especially in this context.]

Truly indeed and without gainsay it is the uniqueness of the majestic glory of Lord Ram that he is only Lord who is ever so eager, so enthusiastic and so diligent in taking good care of the sustenance, welfare and well-being of the most lowly, the most wretched, the most downtrodden and the most humble ones like me (Tulsidas) (adhama/adhana aguna ālasinakō pālibō phabi āyō raghunāyaka navīnakō)².

[²To wit, the Lord never gets weary of routinely taking care of such people. It is a regular habit with him; it is part of his character that he never tires of doing so, and he does it most cheerfully, affectionately and willingly, and without any obligations of any kind upon the beneficiaries of his grace and largesse. The Lord does not either boast of his magnanimity and benevolence, nor does he embarrass the beneficiary by telling anyone about him.] (2).

Oh Lord, what can I openly say with my mouth (mukhakai kahā kahaum)? You are wise and clever and all-knowing, hence you know what is in my heart and mind because nothing is hidden from you (bidita hai jīkī prabhu prabīnakō). [To wit, since the Lord knows one's inner thoughts, there is no need to express them in words.]

For those whose Mana (mind and heart) is overcome with gloom and depression, whose Mana is darkened by sins and perversions, whose Mana is tarnished by corruptions and vices of all kinds, whose Mana is overshadowed by evil thoughts and gloomy forebodings like the case of Tulsidas (tulasīsē mana malīnakō)³—for such people your majesty's Lordship is the only beacon of light of hope, the only source for solace and succour, and the only strength on which they can rely for their welfare and well-being (ēka tēka rāvarī) anywhere in the three divisions of this world ("tihu lōkamēm"—i.e. in the heaven, the terrestrial world, and hell or the nether world), or anytime in their lives ("tīhū kāla"—i.e. in the past, the present and the future).

[³These apparently degrading and disparaging words that Tulsidas uses for himself only go to show his humililty and modesty. They do not actually mean that this great saint-poet was like a sinful and fallen person as described in this or any other verse of this book 'Vinai Patrika', but they simply mean that even if a person is extremely lowly and fallen and has lost all hopes of redemption, he should not lose heart and he should not fear to approach Lord Ram with his burden of sins, for the Lord is so gracious and compassionate that he would overlook the person's bad past and take full measures to protect his future. Howbeit, it is important that when the person approaches the Lord seeking his mercy and grace then he does so with sincerity and a firm determination to not repeat the evil doings of his past. He should fear the Lord in the least, he should not be affright that the Lord would send him to the gallows, but be fully confident that he is sure to get the Lord's grace and mercy.] (3).

Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma: the most munificent,
benevolent and magnanimous Lord-of-all in this world

(275)

द्वार द्वार दीनता कही, काढ़ि रद, परि पाहू।
हैं दयालु दुनी दस दिसा, दुख-दोष-दलन-छम, कियो न सँभाषन काहू।।1।।
तनु जन्यो/जनतेउ कुटिल कीट ज्यों, तज्यो मातु-पितु हू।
काहेको रोष, दोष काहिधौं, मेरेही अभाग मोसों सकुचत छुड़ सब छाँहू।।2।।
दुखित देखि संतन कह्यो, सोचै जनि मन मोहू।
तोसे पसु-पाँवर-पातकी परिहरे न सरन गये, रघुबर ओर निबाहूँ।।3।।
तुलसी तिहारो भये भयो सुखी प्रीति-प्रतीति बिनाहू।
नामकी महिमा, सील नाथको, मेरो भलो बिलोकि अब तैं सकुचाहूँ, सिहाहूँ।।4।।

(275)

dvāra dvāra dīnatā kahī, kāḍhi rada, pari pāhū.
haim dayālu dunī dasa disā, dukha-dōṣa-dalana-chama,
kiyō na sam̐bhāṣana kāhū. 1.
tanu jan'yō/janatē'u kuṭila kīṭa jyōm, tajyō mātu-pitu hū.
kāhēkō rōṣa, dōṣa kāhidhauṁ, mērēhī abhāga mōsōm
sakucata chu'i saba chām̐hū. 2.
dukhita dēkhi santana kahyō, sōcai jani mana mām̐hū.
tōsē pasu-pām̐vara-pātakī pariharē na sarana gayē,
raghubara ōra nibāhūm̐. 3.
tulasī tihārō bhayē bhayō sukhī prīti-pratīti bināhū.
nāmakī mahimā, sīla nāthakō, mērō bhalō bilōki
aba tēm̐ sakucāhum̐, sihāhūm̐. 4.

Verse no. 275—[Reminiscing about his impoverished upbringing when he was deprived of even the basic comforts and dignities in life, and musing about his past sufferings, agonies and pains, Tulsidas says—]

[Oh Lord!] I had gone from door to door in despair, narrating my tales of woes (dvāra dvāra dīnatā kahī) by sheepishly opening my mouth to bare my teeth (“kāḍhi rada”—i.e., I pretended to smile and be polite while expressing my miserable condition in the hope that the other person would show some pity upon me and help me).

I had even fell down and grasped their feet (as a token of my absolute surrender before them), and begged them to have some pity and mercy upon me (pari pāhū).

There are so many great merciful and kind Lords and Masters (haim dayālu) who are reputed in all the ten directions of the world (dunī dasa disā)¹ for their ability to remove the cause of distress and suffering of those who come to them seeking relief for their agonies, as well as for being gracious enough to forgive any

misdemeanour committed by such people who surrender themselves before them (dukha-dōṣa-dalana-chama).

I had gone to all such Lords and Masters, but all my efforts were in vain, for none of them even talked with me (kiyō na samḃhāṣana kāhū)².

[¹The “ten directions of the world” simply means ‘everywhere’. Technically, these ten directions are the following: north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.]

²To wit, no one bothered to find out what I wanted, why I had come to them, or what was the reason of my misery and woeful condition that had led me to fall at their feet. They simply neglected me and turned away.] (1).

My parents had abandoned me just like worms that abandon their own off-spring immediately after birth (tanu jan'yō/janatē'u kuṭila kiṭa jyōm, tājyō mātu-pitu hū)³.

[³The worm is not at all bothered about its young ones once they hatch from their eggs. Tulsidas says that he was too abandoned by his parents soon after his birth. The reader is advised to go through a brief life-sketch of Tulsidas that is included as an appendix at the end of this book to get an idea of this great saint's life in order to fully appreciate this present observation.]

Say, why should I be angry and indignant, and whom should I blame (kāhēkō rōṣa, dōṣa kāhidhaurṃ)? All this is due to my own misfortunes (mērēhī abhāga). I am so wretched, unfortunate, unholy, lowly and downtrodden that people shy away from me so the extent that they are reluctant even to touch my shadow (i.e., they keep away from me, treat me as an un-touchable, think that I am cursed, and therefore everyone abhors my company) (mōsōm sakucata chu'i saba chāmḥū)⁴.

[⁴To wit, it's the fiat of Fate, and all my sufferings and agonies are destined in my destiny by the cruel Creator. Why should I then complain about them; why should I either blame my parents or the Lords and Masters of the world for subjecting me to such neglect? Why then should I feel indignant, dispondent and distressed?] (2).

Seeing me disheartened and in such a dejected and despaired condition, saints and pious people took pity on me. They assuaged my despondent heart and assured me not to worry, for there was still hope left for me (dukhita dēkhi santana kahyō, sōcai jani mana māmḥū).

They advised me that even animals and birds who were as sinful, lowly and wretched as you were not abandoned, rejected or forsaken by Lord Sri Ram when they went to take shelter and refuge at his feet, and they were all sustained till the end (tōsē pasu-pāmḃvara-pātakī pariharē na sarana gayē, raghubara ōra nibāhūm)⁵.

[⁵Hence, I must also go and seek the blessings of Lord Ram instead of brooding about my fate and crying over it. I must learn a lesson from the life of such lowly and helpless creatures as animals and birds who were taken good care by Lord Ram, and feel assured of happiness for myself.

To wit, Lord Ram not only took care of them as long as they lived in this world but also ensured that they found liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death by blessing their souls with emancipation and salvation. So, wouldn't the merciful Lord take care of me? Why do I worry?] (3).

Ever since that time, this Tulsidas has become ‘one of yours’ (i.e., he has unconditionally accepted you as his only Lord and Master, as his only Guardian and Patron) (*tulasī tihārō bhayē*), and though he cannot say with certainty that he has great affection or faith in you⁶, but still he can vouchsafe that he is very happy and in great comfort (*bhayō sukhī prīti-pratīti bināhū*).

[⁶Why do I say that I am not certain that I have the highest degree of pure devotion and faith in Lord Ram? It is because had I possessed these virtues I wouldn’t have been suffering and wailing like the way I am doing at present, and have been repeatedly doing in the so many previous verses of this book *Vinai Patrika*. I wouldn’t also have repeatedly pleaded with Lord Ram to show mercy on me, and wouldn’t have repeatedly accused the Lord of not paying heed to my prayers as I have been doing over and over again in so many verses earlier. Does it not show that I lack full confidence and conviction in the merciful and compassionate nature of the Lord, that I need not repeat my prayers so often as the Lord would surely must have taken into cognizance my very first prayer itself?]

Oh Lord! Verily indeed and in all sooth, your majesty’s holy and divine name as well as your inherent merciful and compassionate nature have such a wonderfully mystical effect that inspite of all my drawbacks and unworthiness they have done all-round good for me and taken care of my well-being and welfare (*nāmakī mahimā, sīla nāthakō, mērō bhalō bilōki*).

I feel so shy and humbled by this graceful nature of yours, and I will laud the greatness of your virtues and glorify your nature of showing so much affection for those who have taken shelter and refuge at your holy feet by singing about them (*aba tēm sakucāhum, sihāhūm*)⁷.

[⁷Tulsidas says that though he is an unworthy person and lacks any good quality that a devotee of the Lord is expected to possess, and that this lack of auspicious virtues in him is compounded by the ill effects of his bad destiny, but still Lord Ram has shown him grace and favour so much so that Tulsidas now feels a sense of bliss, happiness and exhilaration, he feels assured of redemption and salvation.

Lord Ram is so very nice and graceful that by merely saying his name and being present before him even a sinful person gets full benefit of the Lord’s mercy and grace.

Tulsidas feels extremely thankful and grateful to Lord Ram that even a lowly and forsaken person like him has benefited immensely from the graceful nature and excellent character of the Lord. So he decided to sing the Lord’s wonderful nature of welcoming and accepting everyone who comes to the Lord seeking refuge and shelter at his holy feet, irrespective of who they are, whether they are eligible or not.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

Lord Śrī Rāma is the Best and a Peerless Lord

कहा न कियो, कहाँ न गयो, सीस काहि न नायो?
 राम रावरे बिन भये जन जनमि—जनमि जग दुख दसहू दिसि पायो ।।1।।
 आस—बिबस खास दास है नीच प्रभुनि जनायो ।
 हा हा करि दीनता कही द्वार—द्वार बार—बार, परी न छार, मुह बायो ।।2।।
 असन—बसन बिनु बावरो जहँ—तहँ उठि धायो ।
 महिमा—मान/असु प्रिय प्रानते तजिखोलि खलनि आगे, खिनु—खिनु पेट खलायो ।।3।।
 नाथ! हाथ कछु नाहि लग्यो, लालच ललचायो ।
 साँच कहाँ, नाच कौनसो, जो न मोहि लोभ लघु हौं निरलज्ज नचायो ।।4।।
 श्रवन—नयन—मन मग/अग लगे, सब थल पतितायो ।
 मूढ़ मारि, हिय हारिकै, हित हेरि हहरि अब चरन—सरन तकि आयो ।।5।।
 दसरथके! समरथ तुही, त्रिभुवन जसु गायो ।
 तुलसी नमत अवलोकिये, बलि, बाँह—बोल दै बिरुदावली बुलायो ।।6।।

(276)

kahā na kiyō, kahām̐ na gayō, sīsa kāhi na nāyō?
 rāma rāvarē bina bhayē jana janami-janami jaga dukh dasahū disi pāyō. 1.
 āsa-bibasa khāsa dāsa hvai nīca prabhuni janāyō.
 hā hā kari dīnatā kahī dvāra-dvāra bāra-bāra, parī na chāra, muha bāyō. 2.
 asana-basana binu bāvarō jaham̐-taham̐ uṭhi dhāyō.
 mahimā-māna/asu priya prānatē tajikhōli khalani āgē,
 khinu-khinu pēṭa khalāyō. 3.
 nātha! hātha kachu nāhi lagyō, lālaca lalacāyō.
 sām̐ca kahaur̐, nāca kaunasō, jō na mōhi lōbha laghu haum̐
 niralajja nacāyō. 4.
 śravana-nayana-mana maga/aga lagē, saba thala patitāyō.
 mūr̐ha mārī, hiya hārikai, hita hēri hahari aba carana-sarana taki āyō. 5.
 dasarathakē! samaratha tuhī, tribhuvana jasu gāyō.
 tulasī namata avalōkiyē, bali, bām̐ha-bōla dai birudāvalī bulāyō. 6.

Verse no. 276—[This verse continues and expands upon the idea expressed in the previous verse nos. 274 and 275.]

What have I not done (kahā na kiyō)? Where have I not gone (kahām̐ na gayō)? Which place is left to visit and try? In front of whom have I not bowed my head (sīsa kāhi na nāyō)?

But oh my King and Lord Sri Ram (rāma rāvarē)! Till the time I had become your servant (devotee, follower), I took repeated births (in different wombs) in this world and suffered from tribulations and miseries in all the ten directions (corners) of the world (but I never ever found peace and happiness anywhere for myself) (bina bhayē jana janami-janami jaga dukh dasahū disi pāyō)¹.

[¹To wit, I did not get peace, happiness, tranquillity and comfort even in the wildest of my dreams no matter where I went, what method I tried, in which form I took birth, which lord or master I served, and what means I tried to adopt and the path I diligently followed to fulfil my wishes. I was left high and dry every time. I felt exploited and cheated by everyone, and I had lost all hopes of redemption till the time I came to you on the advice of saints. And as soon as I approached you, it seemed a

magic had happened—for all my woes and torments vanished in thin air; I felt light in my heart and mind, and it was like being surrounded by an aura of bliss and divinity. It felt so nice and graceful indeed!] (1).

Under the influence of ignorance and delusions, and driven by my desires to get worldly comfort, pleasures and riches (*āsa-bibasa*), I had wistfully gone from door to door of so many Lords and Masters whose heart were impure, corrupt, pervert and selfish (*nīca prabhuni*) in the hope of getting my wishes fulfilled at their places. To please them and get their attention, I had surrendered myself before them unconditionally, pleaded with them that I was most loyal and very devoted to them, and begged before them most humbly (*khāsa dāsa hvai janāyō*), narrating my woeful tales of poverty and ill-fortunes with cries of pity in my voice in the futile hope that it would in some way arouse sympathy and empathy for my miserable condition in their stern hearts (*hā hā kari dīnatā kahī dvāra-dvāra bāra-bāra*), but nothing did I get in return.

I opened my (hungry) mouth in front of them in the hope that some morsel of food would be put into it, but I faced humiliation and insult instead because not even discarded or burnt pieces of food, or even the worthless ash was given to me (to fill my mouth and stomach with) (*parī na chāra, muha bāyō*)².

[²To wit, I roamed from one donor to another, I went to each person of whom I had heard that he was compassionate and a liberal giver of charity, but to my dismay I found that none had any interest in me. They thought me to be so unworthy and miserable that it was worthless to give anything to me as I was already doomed to ruin and suffering by the fiat of destiny, and all these so-called charitable persons did not want to invite the wrath of the Creator by trying to help someone like me who was condemned to the roasted in the fire of agonies by the Creator himself. So all of them turned away from me and completely neglected me as if I did not exist.

Here, “food” is a metaphor for the basic requirements of sustenance that are needed for one’s existence in this world, and “Lords and Masters” include all the gods and deities to whom a person pays obeisance and offers oblations for fulfilment of his wishes. Tulsidas essentially says that he had tried all these, but ended empty-handed. He regrets and feels remorseful that though he knew about Lord Ram as he had heard about the Lord from saints and pious people and had read about him in the scriptures, he was so utterly stupid that he did not go to him.

He regrets and feels ashamed of himself that while he had shamelessly gone and begged before heartless lords and masters who had haughtily scorned at him, he had abstained from approaching Lord Ram for so long inspite of being aware of the Lord’s grand reputation, excellent qualities and majestic virtues of being the most benevolent, merciful, graceful, compassionate, liberal, large-hearted and magnanimous Lord ever known in this world, a Lord who cheerfully welcomes and affectionately embraces all those who have no other place to go.] (2).

Without food (to eat) and clothes (to wear), I ran around here and there (everywhere) like a mad man (*asana-basana binu bāvarō jaham̐-taham̐ uṭhi dhāyō*).

Forsaking and sacrificing my self-respect, dignity and honour which should be dearer to one more than his life (*mahimā-māna/asu priya prānatē tajikhōli*

khalani āgē), I had showed my empty stomach to wicked rascals every other moment (in the hope that they would take pity on me) (khinu-khinu pēṭa khalāyō) (3).

Oh Lord (nātha)! Due to greed and avarice, I wistfully yearned (for the pleasures of the objects of the senses in this material world) (lālaca lalacāyō), but I found nothing anywhere, i.e., I found no solace or succour anywhere; I drew a blank (hātha kachu nāhi lagyō).

I say honestly and truthfully (sām̐ca kahaum̐)—which dance is there that the wretched, wicked and mean ‘greed and avarice’ did not make me dance in a shameless manner, compromising on my dignity and self-respect? (nāca kaunasō, jō na mōhi lōbha laghu hauṁ niralajja nacāyō)³.

[³To wit, I was so dumb and deaf that I blindly followed the directions of my greed and lust to dance to the tunes of the world and obey the commands of its lords and masters. I did not have any compunctions in acting most meanly and in a silly manner just in order to satisfy my greed, lust and passion.] (4).

I had tried to put my ears, eyes and mind on their respective paths in which they found interest in the hope that it would be helpful to me in attaining my objectives (śravana-nayana-mana maga/aga lagē), but everywhere (i.e., at all my attempts) I was only downgraded (i.e., I only faced failure and despair) (saba thala patitāyō).

[When I could not find satisfaction, peace, comfort and happiness anywhere, then—] I beat my head and accepted defeat in my heart (“mūrha māri, hiya hārikai”—i.e., I became absolutely hopeless and despondent). That is why, being very agitated, extremely distressed, profoundly worried and full of despair, I finally decided to come and seek shelter in your (Lord Ram’s) holy feet because this seems to me my only hope of ever getting welfare and well-being for myself, my only source from where to expect solace and succour, and it is surely and without doubt my last resort (hita hēri hahari aba carana-sarana taki āyō) (5).

Oh King Dasrath's son (“dasarathakē”—i.e. Lord Sri Ram)! You are the only Lord in this world who is able, adept, potent and competent in every respect (samaratha tuhī).

It is your majesty’s excellent fame, glory, virtues and characters that are universally sung (praised) in all the three Lokas (“tribhuvana jasu gāyō”—i.e. the subterranean world, the temporal world, and the heavenly world).

Tulsidas humbly, earnestly and truthfully begs before you to take notice that he is reverentially bowing his head at your feet, and requests you to please remember your merciful and benevolent nature to be gracious enough to glance at him (tulasī namata avalōkiyē, bali)⁴.

I say in all sooth and without any gainsay that it is your renowned fame and majestic glory (known as “Birdawali”)⁵ that assures everyone of redemption and fulfilment of desires that has motivated me to come to you. It has given me moral support and hand-held me to come and surrender before you (with the hope that you will welcome me and provide me with protection, solace and succour) (bām̐ha-bōla dai birudāvalī bulāyō).

[⁴In verse no. 273, a similar idea is expressed by Tulsidas.

⁵Tulsidas has appealed to and invoked Sri Ram's '*Birdawali*' which represents a long chain of legendary glories, of excellent character and renowned virtues of Lord Sri Ram who is famed for being extremely benevolent, munificent, magnanimous, kind, gracious and compassionate benefactor of all, irrespective of who they are. The Lord is very careful, vigilant, agile, adept, competent, proficient and able to uphold his open declaration that he will accept all who seek his patronage and protection, and come to him to seek refuge and shelter in this holy feet. The Lord has also time and again affirmed that he would purify, redeem, emancipate and deliver all those who are have no chance of attaining freedom from the entangling web of sins and vices so typical of Kaliyug. Creatures who are very miserable, downtrodden, mean, base, pervert, decadent, depraved, sinful, vile, hated, despised and detested by the world are also assured of emancipation and salvation if they surrender before the Lord and pray to him for redemption of their souls.

In brief, all those who can never hope to ever break free from the vicious grip of the cycle of birth and death and escape from its attendant horrors can find their redeemer and helper in Lord Ram, with only one caveat—and it is that the person must regret for his past sincerely, and be determined to mend his ways whatever comes in the way. If he surrenders before the Lord with this firmness of mind and has developed devotion and affection for the Lord, his holy name and his holy feet, then let him or her be assured of the Lord's grace and mercy that is showered without any questions asked upon such a person like the rejuvenating raindrops that fall upon the parched land after a long spell of drought, or like the reassuring brilliant rays of the bright sun seen after the hideous darkness of the previous night that had sent chill down the spine of a person who had seen ghosts and phantom then. As an example we can cite some verses for reference, viz. nos. 262, 272, 274, though this idea is spread throughout this book as its central theme.

Lord Ram's soothing grace and mercy acts as a balm for those tormented by the fire of the Tритаप, i.e. the three horrors of life in this world that are called 'Adhibhutik'—those related to the affairs of the temporal world, 'Adhidaivaik'—those related to angry gods and opposed stars, and 'Adhyatmik'—related to spiritual problems. See verse no. 260, stanza no. 2.

The Lord acts as a bridge to take a creature effortlessly across the tumultuous ocean represented by this world of transmigration. See verse no. 273, stanza no. 2.

The point to note in this last stanza is that Tulsidas has personified Ram's '*Birdawali*' by saying that it has given the 'support of its arms' and 'promise of its words' in calling him to Ram's holy feet. In effect this means that this '*Birdawali*' is the one who inspired Tulsidas—even extended its helping hands when he hesitated, was reluctant and in a dilemma, demured or faltered and not Sri Ram himself (personally). In fact, even a quick perusal of the verses of this book will reveal that Sri Ram does not seem to answer Tulsidas' pleadings—he remains mute and non-committal. Hence, Ram's '*Birdawali*' is deemed to be superior to Sri Ram himself even as his 'Holy Name' is superior to him. So, both Ram's '*Birdawali*' and 'Holy Name' are more important than Sri Ram himself in a physical form.

And in consonant with Sri Ram's *Birdawali* as described above, not only Tulsidas but all others who pay heed to the saint's advice are guaranteed redemption.] (6).

Request for Lord Rāma's endorsement on Tulasīdās' final petition-1

(277)

राम राय! बिनु रावरे मेरे को हितु साँचो?
 स्वामी—सहित सबसों कहौं, सुनि—गुनि बिसेषि कोउ रेख दूसरी खाँचो ।।1।।
 देह—जीव—जोगके सखा मृषा टाँचन टाँचो।
 किये बिचार सार कदलि ज्यों, मनि कनक संग लघु लसत बीच बिच काँचो ।।2।।
 'विनय—पत्रिका' दीनकी, बापु! आपु ही बाँचो।
 हिये हेरि तुलसी लिखी, सो सुभाय सही करि बहुरि पूँछिये पाँचों ।।3।।

(277)

rāma rāya! binu rāvarē mērē kō hitu sām̐cō?
 svāmī-sahita sabasōm̐ kahaur̐, suni-guni bisēṣi kō'u rēkha dūsarī khām̐cō. 1.
 dēha-jīva-jōgakē sakhā mṛṣā ṭām̐cana ṭām̐cō.
 kiyē bicāra sāra kadali jyōm̐, mani kanaka saṅga laghu lasata bīca bica
 kām̐cō. 2.
 'vinaya-patrikā' dīnakī, bāpu! āpu hī bām̐cō.
 hiyē hēri tulasī likhī, sō subhāya sahī kari bahuri pūm̐chiyē pām̐cōm̐. 3.

Verse no. 277—Oh my King and Lord, Sri Ram (rāma rāya)! Who is my true friend and benefactor except your majesty's Lordship (binu rāvarē mērē kō hitu sām̐cō)?

I openly address and challenge everyone to draw a line and prove me wrong if what I say is untrue (svāmī-sahita sabasōm̐ kahaur̐, suni-guni bisēṣi kō'u rēkha dūsarī khām̐cō) (1).

All the different relationships, such as friends, companions and kith and kin, that a Jiva (living being) forms in this world are related and limited to his gross body (and they have nothing to do with his soul), and therefore they are all tentative and false like the body itself (dēha-jīva-jōgakē sakhā mṛṣā)¹.

[¹The gross body is not the real identity of any living being; it is perishable and actually an impediment in the spiritual welfare of the living being. Therefore, all relations formed by this body have the same value—they are not real, they are perishable and they are impediment for the long-term welfare of the Jiva.]

These worldly relationships are stitched together with an imaginary thread (mṛṣā ṭām̐cana ṭām̐cō), and when one ponders deeply one comes to the conclusion that they are like the stem of the plantain tree that peels out in layers after layers, leaving nothing solid behind (kiyē bicāra sāra kadali jyōm̐)².

[²To wit, all worldly relationships are imaginary and absolutely tentative like pieces of cloth supposed to be held together by virtue of being stitched with each

other by an imaginary and non-existent thread. Likewise, they have no pith or essence in them just the pith-less stem of the plantain tree.]

These relationships give the impression of being real and attractive just like the case of worthless glass beads that look valuable if they are put randomly in between priceless pieces of gems and pearls in a garland (mani kanaka saṅga laghu lasata bīca bica kāmṇō) (2).

Oh my Father (bāpu)! Please be kind to read yourself (āpu hī bāmṇō) this humble petition of this poor fellow (Tulsidas) which he is presenting to you in the form of this composition called 'Vinai Patrika' ('vinaya-patrikā' dīnakī). Verily indeed and in all sooth, Tulsidas has searched his heart and poured out whatever was inside it, and therefore whatever is written in it is true and honest, and without deceit and pretensions (hiyē hēri tulasī likhī).

So oh Lord, remember your merciful nature and take pity on Tulsidas to first put your signature on it as a token of your approval and acceptance (sō subhāya sahī kari), and only then you may consult your company of advisors later (if you want to do so) (bahuri pūṁchiyē pāmṇōm)³.

[³Tulsidas means that if the Lord starts taking views of others on his petition, then it is sure to be rejected as he is a sinful person and not worthy for receiving the Lord's grace. But at the same time it is not deniable that Tulsidas has no other Lord except Lord Ram and he is fully devoted to him, so the Lord can't turn him away. So it would be wiser for the Lord to take a firm decision in Tulsidas' favour and accept him without questions asked.] (3).

Request for Lord Rāma's endorsement on Tulasīdās' final petition-2

(278)

पवन-सुवन! रिपु-दवन! भरतलाल! लखन! दीनकी।
 निज निज अवसर सुधि किये, बलि जाउँ, दास-आस पूजि है खासखीनकी॥1॥
 राज-द्वार भली सब कहैं साधु-समीचीनकी।
 सुकृत-सुजस, साहिब-कृपा, स्वारथ-परमारथ, गति भये गति-बिहीनकी॥2॥
 समय सँभारि सुधारिबी तुलसी मलीनकी।
 प्रीति-रीति समुझाइबी नतपाल कृपालुहि परमिति पराधीनकी॥3॥

(278)

pavana-suvana! ripu-davana! bharatalāla! lakhana! dīnakī.
 nija nija avasara sudhi kiyē, bali jā'umṇ, dāsa-āsa pūji hai khāsakhīnakī. 1.
 rāja-dvāra bhalī saba kahaim sādhu-samīcīnakī.
 sukr̥ta-sujasa, sāhiba-kṛpā, svāratha-paramāratha, gati bhayē gati-bihīnakī. 2.

samaya sam̐bhāri sudhāribī tulasī malīnakī.
prīti-rīti samujhā'ibī natapāla kṛpāluhi paramiti parādhīnakī. 3.

Verse no. 278—[In verse no. 277 we have read that Tulsidas has petitioned Lord Ram. Then he had a second thought. Others in the royal court of the Lord, especially those who were very close to him and were always consulted and taken into confidence by the Lord in all matters, were watching everything closely, and Tulsidas intuitively realised that it would not be proper and wise to for him to by-pass them as it might prove counter-productive for him. He wanted to join the great legion of the Lord's devotees and followers, and so it would seem odd and haughty on his part to stand alone separately in the court where other devotees of the Lord were also present, instead of striking a cordial and friendly relationship with them in the very beginning itself. After all, he would soon join them, and though the Lord knew him very well for long but as of now he was a newcomer for the rest of the members of the Lord's court. It would not seem courteous and polite on his part to neglect them and not even say a 'hello' to them while expecting them to accept him warmly when he joins their ranks soon. So, the wise and erudite saint immediately rectified himself and turned to Hanuman (the most trusted devotee of Lord Ram and who always goes out of his way to help others to become devotee of the Lord), and the Lord's three brothers, Shatrughan, Bharat and Laxman, asking their help in supporting him to be accepted by the Lord. The response was positive and enthusiastic as expected.

There is another important and remarkable point to note here. Tulsidas has cleverly first directly approached Lord Ram and handed him his petition for mercy by hand to him. Then he turns to others, seeking their cooperation and help. He wanted to preempt any chances of their opining negatively against him, thereby compelling the Lord to defer any decision in his favour, because these courtiers would have surely observed the facial expressions of Lord Ram when Tulsidas had handed his petition to the Lord directly as done in verse no. 277, and it must have been obvious to them by now that the Lord is highly favourable towards Tulsidas and is most willing to accept him as his devotee, both in a standalone capacity as well being a member of the great legion of the Lord's followers and devotees. Thus, even if they had certain reservations against Tulsidas, they would keep it to themselves, and instead publicly support his candidature. Refer verse no. 279, stanza no. 2 below.

From the language of the following verse it appears that the Lord took Tulsidas' petition and kept it aside for consideration, perhaps seeking time to consult members of his court listed herein below. Tulsidas picked up the hint, and so he immediately turned towards them and prayed to them to support his petition when the Lord puts it before them for advice. This idea is evident in the very first stanza below.]

'Oh the Son of Wind-God ("pavana-suvana"—i.e. Hanuman)! Oh the Vanquisher of Enemies ("ripu-davana"—i.e. Shatrughan)! Oh Bharat (bharatalāla)! Oh Laxman (lakhana)! Whenever the opportune time arrives and as soon as it is possible (nija nija avasara sudhi kiyē), remember this poor, humble, meek, lowly and wretched Tulsidas (dīnakī).

I invoke your kind and helpful nature to plead before you in the most humble, sincere and urgent way I can (**bali jā'um**). [To wit, I most earnestly beg of you to intercede on my behalf when your turn comes to give your opinion on my petition to Lord Ram.]

If you show kindness and are gracious enough to do so, then the hopes of this most weak and resourceless servant called Tulsidas will be fulfilled and he would feel accomplished (when Lord Sri Ram would endorse this 'Vinay-Patrika' by putting his signature on it, and for this kind gesture of all of you I shall forever remain indebted and obliged to you) (**dāsa-āsa pūji hai khāsakhīnakī**) (1).

In the royal court, acclaimed saints and those with pious and pure heart are always praised, revered and honoured, and welcomed—what is new in it, for it is the norm (**rāja-dvāra bhalī saba kahaiṁ sādhu-samīcīnakī**)?

But if you all recommend the case of this shelter-less, desolate, destitute, poor and resourceless fellow (Tulsidas) (**gati-bihīnakī**), then he shall get refuge in the holy feet of the Lord and find an eternal destination for rest and peace in his life (**gati bhayē**).

In return you would get excellent fame and great renown for your kind heartedness and charitable act (**sujasa**), you will derive immense personal satisfaction and happiness by doing good to a helpless soul who needed your help in his times of distress (**sukṛta**), and your Lord (Ram) would also be exceedingly pleased with you for this kind act by showing his pleasure and blessing you for your noble act (because the Lord gets naturally and habitually pleased on those who show mercy and compassion on others who are lowly, meek, weak, distressed, humble, downtrodden and miserable) (**sāhiba-krpā**).

In this way, many purposes would be served for your own good and welfare by this one single kind act of yours: for instance, your worldly interest as well as your spiritual well-being would be ensured (**svāratha-paramāratha**)¹.

[¹To wit, by helping me get my petition approved by Lord Ram and thereby providing a buoy to my sinking spirits, you would get excellent fame and honour in this world for helping a destitute and suffering person find shelter, solace and succour, and the attendant contentedness and joy that this charitable act would bestow upon you would help you further in your spiritual pursuit as all good and meritorious deeds always do to their doer.] (2).

So, as soon as you get the right opportunity (**samaya sambhāri**), remember and take care of the work of this sinful, humble, meek and wretched Tulsidas (who has pleaded before you so earnestly and tearfully) (**sudhāribī tulasī malīnakī**).

Explain carefully the sincerity, the enormity, the depth and the gravity of the love, affection, conviction, faith and devotion (**prīti-rīti samujhā'ibī -- paramiti**) that this dependant (servant or devotee) of the Lord, who has surrendered himself before the Lord, has for him (**natapāla -- parādhhīnakī**), and remind the Lord of his nature and reputation of being merciful, compassionate, gracious and kind (**krpāluhi paramiti**) to such persons who have come to seek refuge and shelter in his holy feet,

no matter how fallen and sinful the seeker may be (prīti-rīti samujhā'ibī natapāla kṛpāluhi paramiti parādhīnakī).’ (3).

Lord Rāma’s Acceptance of Tulasīdās’ Prayers & Endorsement of his Devotion: Tulasīdās’ Final Redemption

(279)

मारुति—मन, रुचि भरतकी लखि लषन कही है।
कलिकालहु नाथ! नाम सों परतीति—प्रीति एक किंकर की निबही है।।1।।
सकल सभा सुनि लै उठी, जानी रीति रही है।
कृपा गरीबनिवाजकी, देखत गरीबको साहब बाँह गही है।।2।।
बिहँसि राम कह्यो ‘सत्य है, सुधि मैंहूँ लही है’।
मुदित माथ नावत, बनी तुलसी अनाथकी, परी रघुनाथ/रघुनाथ हाथ सही है।।3।।

(279)

mārutī-mana, ruci bharatakī lakhi laṣana kahī hai.
kalikālahu nātha! nāma sōm paratīti-prīti ēka kiṅkara kī nibahī hai. 1.
sakala sabhā suni lai uṭhī, jānī rīti rahī hai.
kṛpā garībanivājakī, dēkhata garībakō sāhaba bām̐ha gahī hai. 2.
biham̐si rāma kahyō ‘satya hai, sudhi mainhūm̐ lahī hai’.
mudita mātha nāvata, banī tulasī anāthakī, parī raghunātha/raghunātha hātha sahī hai. 3.

Verse no. 279—[The royal court of Lord Ram is in session. Tulsidas’ petition comes up for hearing. Laxman spoke on behalf of the others as follows—]

Laxman observed that Hanuman was internally agreeable to Tulsidas’ prayers of acceptance by the Lord, and Bharat was also favourably inclined. So Laxman took the initiative and spoke for all of them (mārutī-mana, ruci bharatakī lakhi laṣana kahī hai): ‘Even in this depraved, pervert, sinful and corrupt age of Kaliyug, oh Lord (kalikālahu nātha), there is this one humble servant of yours (i.e. Tulsidas) who has been successful in having abiding love, affection, faith and devotion for you in spite of all the odds stacked against him (nāma sōm paratīti-prīti ēka kiṅkara kī nibahī hai)¹.’

[¹To wit, in spite of being surrounded by sins and worldly perversions all around him, Tulsidas has managed to be pious and saintly; he has managed to be devoted to Lord Ram when all the world was morally and spiritually degraded.]

When Laxman made this submission, the whole court got up to unanimously approve of it (sakala sabhā suni lai uṭhī), saying: ‘Yes indeed. This is the truth, and we all endorse it because we are aware of his undiluted devotion, faith and affection for the Lord (jānī rīti rahī hai). Indeed and without gainsay, the merciful Lord (Sri Ram), who takes care of the poor and the wretched (kṛpā garībanivājakī), too thinks highly of him and is very favourably inclined towards him. Even as everyone was

watching, the Lord had held him by the arm, welcomed him and accepted him (dēkhata garībakō sāhaba bām̐ha gahī hai).’ (2).

When Lord Sri Ram saw that the entire assembly was in favour of Tulsidas, he smiled happily and said, ‘Yes, it is true. I am aware of this fact.’ (biham̐si rāma kahyō ‘satya hai, sudhi mainhūm̐ lahī hai’).

What more was left to be done and expected. Lord Ram instantly signed the petition of Tulsidas in his own hand and put his seal as a token of approval (parī raghunātha/raghunātha hātha sahī hai)!

Tulsidas was overwhelmed with joy at the Lord's grace and mercy for accepting him; he was exhilarated and bowed his head before the Lord for now Tulsidas’ destiny and fate were mended forever for good (mudita mātha nāvata, banī tulasī anāthakī)!! (3).

The End

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Appendix - 1

Most popular verses of Vinai-Patrika

The following verses of Vinai-Patrika are most popular amongst the masses and are recited or sung with the greatest of devotion, reverence and humility. The list is not meant to be exhaustive in the sense that besides the listed verses, the rest are not popular, but is only meant to be indicative. The appeal of all the verses is equally intense. While one may find the melody of his heart reflected in one particular set of verses, others may find it in another, even as different musical instruments give different tunes and shades of music, but they are 'music' nevertheless :-

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Verse No.</i>	<i>1st Line of Verse</i>
1.	36	मंगल—मूरति, मारुत—नंदन... maṅgala-mūraṭi māruta-nandana.
2.	41	कबहुक अंब, अवसर पाइ... kabahumka amba, avasara pā'i.
3.	45	श्री राम चन्द्र कृपाल भज मन... śrī rāmacandra kṛpālu bhaju mana
4.	66	राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जप बावरे... rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu bāvarē.
5.	68	राम राम राम जीह जोलौं तू न जपिहै... rāma rāma rāma jīha jaulauṁ tū na japihai.
6.	79	तू दयाल, दीन हौं... dēva-tū dayālu, dīna hauṁ.
7.	87	सुनु मन मूढ़ सिखावन मेरो... sunu mana mūrha sikhāvana mērō.
8.	94	काहे ते हरि मोहि बिसारो... kāhē tē hari mōhiṁ bisārō.

9. 96 जो पै जिय धरिहौ अवगुन जनके...
jau pai jiya dharihau avaguna janakē.
10. 97 जो पै हरि जनके औगन गहते...
jau pai hari janakē auguna gahatē.
11. 98 ऐसी हरि करत दास पर प्रीति...
aisī hari karata dāsapara prīti.
12. 99 विरद गरीब निवाज राम को...
birada garībanivāja rāmakō.
13. 101 जाउँ कहाँ तजि चरन तुम्हारे...
jā'um̐ kahām̐ taji carana tumhārē.
14. 105 अब न नसाहीं, अब न नसैहौं...
abalaum̐ nasānī, aba na nasaihaum̐.
15. 111 केशव! कहि न जाई का कहिये...
kēsava! kahi na jā'i kā kahiyē.
16. 114 माधव! मो समान जग माहीं...
mādhava! mō samāna jaga māhīṁ.
17. 143 सुनहु राम रघुबीर गुसाईं...
sunahu rāma raghubīra gusā'īm̐.
18. 149 कहाँ जाउँ, कासौं कहाँ?...
kahām̐ jā'um̐, kāsōṁ kahaum̐--?
19. 160 मैं हरि पति पावन सुनें...
maiṁ hari patita-pāvana sunē.
20. 162 ऐसो को उदार जग माहीं...

aisō kō udāra jaga māhīm.

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| 21. | 164 | <p>जानत प्रीति—रीति रघुराई...</p> <p>jānata prīti-rīti raghurā'ī.</p> |
| 22. | 166 | <p>ऐसे राम दीन हितकारी...</p> <p>aisē rāma dīna-hitakārī.</p> |
| 23. | 174 | <p>जाके प्रिय न राम बैदेही...</p> <p>jākē priya na rāma-baidēhī.</p> |
| 24. | 175 | <p>जो पै लगन राम सौं नाहीं...</p> <p>jō pai rahani/lagana rāmasōm nāhīm.</p> |
| 25. | 179 | <p>कहाँ जाऊँ, कासौं कहौं...</p> <p>kahām' jā'um', kāsōm kahaurm.</p> |
| 26. | 186 | <p>कौन जतन बिनती करिये...</p> <p>kauna jatana binatī kariyē.</p> |
| 27. | 189 | <p>राम कहत चल, राम कहत चल...</p> <p>rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu.</p> |
| 28. | 198 | <p>मन पछितै है अवसर बीते...</p> <p>mana pachitaihai avasara bītē.</p> |
| 29. | 204 | <p>जो मन लागे राम चरन अस...</p> <p>jō mana lāgai rāmacarana asa.</p> |
| 30. | 208 | <p>नाथ सो कौन बिनती कहि सुनावौं...</p> <p>nātha sōm kauna binatī kahi sunāvaurm.</p> |
| 31. | 211 | <p>कबहुँ रघुबंस मनि...</p> <p>kabahum' raghubansamani!</p> |

32. 235 ऐसेहि जनम—समूह सिराने...
aisēhi janama-samūha sirānē.
33. 242 तुमसम दीनबन्धु, न दीन कोउ मो सम...
tumasama dīnabandhu, na dīna kō'u mōsama
34. 253 राम! राखिए सरन
rāma! rākhiyē sarana
35. 254 राम! रावरो नाम मेरो मातु पितु है...
rāma! rāvarō nāma mērō mātu-pitu hai.

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Appendix – 2

Theme-wise Classification of Verses

1. Prayer offered to Lord Ganesh: Verse no. 1
2. Prayer offered to the Sun God: Verse no. 2
3. Prayers offered to Lord Shiva: Verse nos. 3—10, 12—14
4. Prayer offered to Lord Bhairav, a form of Lord Shiva: Verse no. 11
5. Prayers offered to Mother Goddess: Verse nos. 15—16
6. Prayers offered to the holy river Ganges: Verse nos. 17—20
7. Prayer offered to the holy river Yamuna: Verse no. 21
8. Prayer offered to Kashi (the holy city of Varanasi): Verse no. 22
9. Prayers offered to Chitrakoot (the place in the forest where Lord Ram had spent some time of his forest sojourn): Verse nos. 23--24
10. Prayers offered to Hanuman (the greatest devotee of Lord Ram who was in the form of a monkey warrior): Verse nos. 25—36
11. Prayers offered to Laxman (the younger brother of Lord Ram): Verse nos. 37—38
12. Prayer offered to Bharat (the younger brother of Lord Ram): Verse no. 39
13. Prayer offered to Shartughan (the younger brother of Lord Ram): Verse no. 40
14. Prayers offered to Sita (the divine consort of Lord Ram and an incarnation of goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu): Verse nos. 41—42
15. Prayers offered to Lord Ram (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being): Verse nos. 43—48, 50—51, 53—56.
16. Prayer offered to Lords Hari-Shankar (a joint prayer to Lord Vishnu & Lord Shiva): Verse no. 49.
17. Different incarnations of Lord Vishnu: Verse no. 52.
18. Saints—their glories and virtues: Verse nos. 57, 172.
19. Lanka, the city of demons—
a metaphor for the evils that dominate the creature's inner-being: Verse no. 58.
20. Forest—a metaphor for journey through life: Verse no. 59.
21. Prayer offered to Lord Nara-Narayan—
The metaphor of the Pilgrimage to Badrikaashram: Verse no. 60
22. Prayer offered to Lord Bindu Madhav: Verse nos. 61-63
23. Glory of Lord Ram and His Holy Name: Verse nos. 64-72, 77, 94, 99-101, 105-107, 129-131, 144, 151, 155-156, 159-160, 168, 173, 184, 192, 213, 254, 227-228, 247, 251-252, 254-255, 262.
24. Advice to the creature: Verse nos. 73-74; 82-84, 132, 135-136, 236.
25. Prayer; Surrender to Lord Ram: Verse nos. 75, 141-142, 248.
26. "Ram Bola": Verse no. 76.
27. Lord Ram is the merciful, gracious, benevolent, benignant and selfless Lord who is a benefactor for all: Verse nos. 78-80, 134, 152, 154, 160, 166, 206-207, 216-217, 222, 232, 262, 264, 274.
28. Tulsidas' humility and humbleness, & Lord Ram's greatness and exalted stature: Verse nos. 79, 118, 148, 158-161, 171, 206-207, 209, 242, 252.
29. The Torments of the world: Verse nos. 81, 124-125, 188.
30. The deluding nature of the world and its associated miseries; various spiritual problems & their Remedy: Verse nos. 82, 91, 111, 116-117, 119-121,

- 154 (3), 188, 199.
31. Journey through Life: Verse nos. 83, 234.
 32. Advice to the Mind: Verse nos. 84-85, 87-90, 124, 126, 143, 196, 199, 224.
 33. Dhruv's mother's advice to her son: Verse no. 86.
 34. The Stubborn and Stupid Mind: Verse nos. 88-90.
 35. How foolish are we: Verse no. 92.
 36. Lord Ram's merciful and benevolent nature: Verse nos. 93, 134, 152-153, 193, 274.
 37. Tulsidas' humility: Verse nos. 95-96, 114, 117-118, 168, 209, 242.
 38. Tulsidas' prayer to Lord Ram to seek the Lord's grace and mercy: Verse nos. 93-94, 103-104, 109-110, 112, 117-118, 125, 127, 134, 141-142, 153-154, 158, 181, 195, 206-207, 209, 231, 243, 248, 251-252.
 39. If Verse nos. 97, 151.
 40. The Macrocosmic vis-à-vis the Microcosmic form of the Lord: Verse no. 98.
 41. Lord Ram is the only benevolent Lord, a true benefactor of all the creatures, and their best friend and well-wisher: Verse nos. 84, 99, 101, 139, 153-154, 160, 162-163, 191-193, 200, 206-207, 217, 210, 213, 216-217, 225, 229-230, 243, 250, 253. 260, 264, 274-276.
 42. Rarity of the Human Body, its real Utility, and the Frailty of the Mind: Verse nos. 83, 88, 102, 198, 201-202.
 43. Seek shelter only at the Holy Feet of Lord Ram: Verse no. 103-104, 131, 160, 197, 204, 218, 253.
 44. Lord Ram's Name is like the gem called 'Chintamani': Verse nos. 105, 116, 129, 206, 235.
 45. The Lowly made Holy by Lord Sri Ram: Verse nos. 106, 137-138, 144, 152, 154, 166, 180, 183, 193, 213-218, 236, 239-241, 247-248, 251, 257, 262.
 46. How to Worship Ram by a symbolic form of Fire-Sacrifice: Verse no. 108.
 47. Establishing Relationship with God: Verse nos. 113, 174-175.
 48. Importance of Wisdom and True Knowledge: Verse nos. 88, 115, 122.
 49. The effect of Maya (delusions) and Moha (worldly attachments): Verse nos. 116, 121.
 50. True saints: Verse no. 118/4.
 51. The World is Like a Dream: Verse nos. 119-121, 188.
 52. How peace can be obtained: Verse nos. 120/5, 246.
 53. Mere talk is not enough: Verse no. 123.
 54. The importance of the Mana (mind): Verse no. 124.
 55. Culprits that Occupy the Heart: Verse no. 125.
 56. Lord Ram's Benevolence & Grace are the Only Solution for the many Spiritual Problems faced by the Creature: Verse nos. 126-128, 135, 192-193, 339-241.
 57. Lord Ram's Holy Feet: Verse nos. 128, 131, 133.
 58. Words of Wisdom for the Welfare of the Creature: Verse no. 135.
 59. The horrors associated with life in this world (birth, childhood, adulthood and old age): Verse no. 136.
 60. The importance of Saints: Verse no. 136/10.
 61. Realisation of true 'Self': Verse no. 136/11.
 62. Immense Effects of Lord's Grace: Verse nos. 137, 159-160.
 63. The Lord's open lotus-like Palms that symbolise the perpetual grant of mercy and grace upon the Devotee: Verse no. 138.

64. The Menace and Moral Corruptions of Kaliyug: Verse nos. 139, 173, 184, 194, 195(2), 220-221, 265-266.
65. The fate of those who have turned away from the Lord: Verse no. 140.
66. The wayward and vagrant tendency of the Mind: Verse nos. 143, 196, 245.
67. A symbolic Village in the Name of Lord Sri Ram: Verse no. 145.
68. Tulsidas pleads with Sri Ram to accept him: Verse nos. 146, 168, 250, 253, 256-260.
69. Evils and Vices are like Pseudo Friends that Ruin a Person: Verse no. 147.
70. Pleading with Sri Ram: Verse nos. 149, 153, 271.
71. Kinship with the Lord: Verse no. 150.
72. Lord Sri Ram is the Best and a Peerless Lord: Verse nos. 153, 154, 157, 159, 179-180, 191, 206-207, 222, 225, 230, 249-250, 276-277.
73. Lord Ram's Name as Kalpa-Tree: Verse nos. 155 (4), 156; 225 (4); 226, 251, 262 (5).
74. Lord Ram's Generosity and Greatness: Verse nos. 106, 162-163, 176-177, 179-180, 182, 185-186, 239-242.
75. Only Lord Ram is a selfless Lord: Verse nos. 163, 216, 229, 249, 264, 274.
76. Lord Ram gives precedence to devotion above everything else: Verse no. 164.
77. Lord Ram Shows Favour to the Humble and the Poor: Verse no. 165.
78. Devotion and Worship of Lord Ram in the Vedantic context: Verse no. 167.
79. Reasons for one's miseries: Verse nos. 168, 244.
80. Tulsidas pleads with Sri Ram: Verse nos. 169, 180-181.
81. Regret at Lack of Devotion: Verse no. 170.
82. Would I'll ever be good? (The Character of a Saint): Verse no. 172
83. Who is a True Companion: Verse no. 174.
84. Life is futile without devotion for Lord Ram: Verse nos. 175, 261.
85. Lord Ram's greatness and Tulsidas' humility: Verse nos. 176, 210-212.
86. Lord Ram is the only Helper and Well-wisher: Verse nos. 177-178, 191, 229, 250.
87. The Parable of the cloud, fish, spoilt coin, Papiha: Verse no. 178.
88. Tulsidas compares Sri Ram with other Lords: Verse no. 180.
89. Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram for protection: Verse nos. 181, 185-187, 210-212, 221.
90. Tulsidas' confidence in his Lord Ram and his determination to get the Lord's benevolence and mercy: Verse nos. 182-183, 192-193, 210-212, 239-243, 261.
91. Lord Sri Ram can be attained by purity and sincerity: Verse no. 185.
92. Importance of Sri Ram's Mercy and Grace:
(Tulsidas pleads with the Lord to save him): Verse nos. 186-187.
93. The metaphor of the Palanquin/The Pilgrim's Journey through life: Verse no. 189.
94. The world is selfish: Verse nos. 190-191, 199-200, 216, 243.
Example of the gods, a deer, the fire, the water, the moon, the sun and the cloud:
Verse no. 191.
Example of the countless worldly relations, such as parents, friends, partners, kith
kin, masters and lords: Verse nos. 199-200, 243.
95. Everything is futile without having affection and devotion for Sri Ram:
Verse no. 194.
96. Having devotion/affection towards Sri Ram's Holy Feet (Parable of
the deer and the parrot): Verse nos. 197, 204.
97. The Golden Opportunity which shouldn't be missed: Verse nos. 198-201.

98. A warning to the Mind: Wake up; Don't be misled and fall into a trap:
Verse nos. 84, 143, 196, 199.
99. Death dangles like a sword on the head of all living beings: Verse no. 200.
100. The world is like a tree or an ocean: Verse no. 202.
101. The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly:
Verse nos. 83-84, 102, 130, 135/1, 151, 194, 198-202.
102. The Analogy of the 15-day waxing phase of the Lunar Cycle: Verse no. 203.
103. How to benefit from the Kalpa Tree symbolised by Lord Sri Ram: Verse no. 205.
104. The metaphor of the 'Bird-catcher': Verse no. 208.
105. Tulsidas' assurance of salvation: Verse nos. 209.
106. What Tulsidas wishes: Verse nos. 210, 231.
107. Ram, will you-----? : Verse nos. 211, 270.
108. Why not me? : Verse nos. 106, 212, 241-242.
109. Example of the Lord's grace & mercy from Lord Krishna's life: Verse no. 214.
110. Proof of Lord Ram's grace and benevolent nature: Verse no. 215, 239-241,
246, 251.
111. All Gods are selfish except Lord Hari (the other name of Lord Ram):
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112. Why should one pray before the Lord: Verse no. 219.
113. Tulsidas' prayer to Lord Ram to save him from the cruelty of Kaliyug:
Verse nos. 220, 221, 265-266.
114. Will the Lord accept me and have benevolence upon me?: Verse no. 223.
115. Lord Ram's Name is superior to Sri Ram himself: Verse no. 228.
116. Sri Ram is my only Lord in this world: Verse no. 229
117. Before whom shall a person reveal the pain and suffering of his heart except
Lord Ram: Verse no. 210, 231-232.
118. One must not try dirty worldly tricks with Sri Ram: Verse no. 233.
119. Life spent in vain: Verse nos. 83, 234.
120. Advice to the tongue: Verse nos. 129, 237, 247.
121. The Jiva (living being) is like a 'Kabandh': Verse no. 238.
122. A person who is embraced and accepted by the Lord is deemed to be
most fortunate and blessed: Verse no. 239.
123. Lord Ram is attainable only by having pure love and affection for him
in one's heart: Verse no. 240.
124. Oh Lord, why don't you show your grace upon me?: Verse no. 241.
125. Why I am unhappy: Verse nos. 168, 244.
126. My treacherous mind and intellect: Verse no. 245.
127. Why is there no peace: Verse nos. 120/5, 246.
128. Lord Ram's Holy Form and Divinity; Importance of Bhakti: Verse no. 251.
129. Tulsidas' Dilemma: Verse nos. 256, 262.
130. Tulsidas asks Lord Ram to say just once, 'Tulsidas, you are mine':
Verse nos. 250/4, 253/3.
131. The glory of Sri Ram, the friend of the downtrodden: Verse no. 257.
132. Tulsidas' humility and his polite request to Sri Ram: Verse nos. 258, 260.
133. Invoking Lord Ram's benevolence & munificence: Verse no. 259.
134. Regret that the life has been spent in futility: Verse no. 261.
135. What one should ask for from Lord Ram if given an opportunity: Verse no. 262.
136. Tulsidas reaffirms his abiding and honest devotion for Sri Ram: Verse no. 263

137. Sri Ram is a matchless Lord because all others are selfish: Verse nos. 264, 274.
138. Tulsidas requests Ram to caution Kaliyug: Verse no. 265.
139. Tulsidas' 'Satyagraha' (determination/vows): Verse no. 267.
140. How will I know that Sri Ram has accepted me?: Verse no. 268.
141. How much love should I have for Lord Ram: Verse no. 269.
142. Tulsidas beseeches his Lord Ram to accept him: 271
143. Tulsidas pleads with his Lord Sri Ram not to procrastinate further in extending grace and protection to him: Verse no. 272.
144. Tulsidas' premonition of his impending death: Verse no. 273.
145. Lord Sri Ram is the only succour and solace: Verse no. 274.
146. Glory of Lord Sri Ram, the most munificent, benevolent and magnanimous Lord-of-all in this world: Verse no. 275.
147. Request for Lord Ram's endorsement on Tulsidas' final petition: Verse nos. 277-278.
148. Lord Ram's acceptance of Tulsidas' prayers and endorsement of his devotion: Tulsidas' final Redemption: Verse no. 279.

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Appendix - 3

Keyword-wise Classification of Verses

The following 'KEYWORD'-wise categorisation of the verses of Vinai-Patrika are only for the purpose of facilitating easy reference, but in no way conclusive or exhaustive because majority of the verses have more than one underlying philosophical idea incorporated in its lines, and to say that one is superior or more important than the other would be unjustified, misleading and wrong. Therefore, the following list is only indicative :-

A.

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Aswathama—226/4

Axiom—227/1

Agitations-3 types—242/4

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Birdawali of Ram—236/1, 276

Bird Catcher—208/2

Bhagwan-meaning—55/9

Birth-Torments of—136/1-9

Boat—243/4

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Birth-torments of—136

Birth-four types—136/9

C.

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Chitrakoot—241/3, 264/5, 266/3

Crocodiles—260/2

Cucurbit—139/8

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Coin—178

Creation-delusionary—111

D.

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 Delusions (sample verses)—82, 111, 116, 119, 120-21
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F.

Fish like mind—92/2, 102
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 Footwear—209/1, 231/4
 Futility of all other means except Lord Ram—173
 Frog—92/5, 142/4, 220/4
 Falcon—90/3
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 Fable-of owl, dog—146
 Foolish—92

G.

Golden opportunity—198, 201-2
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 Ganges-reference to—218/3
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 How is the Lord conquered—204/1-2, 205/4
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I.

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K.

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" of musk-deer—244/2

" of parrot—197/2

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" of Totka—272/2

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" of mud-pitcher—200/1

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Appendix – 4

A Brief Life-sketch of Goswami Tulsidas

One of the greatest saints, poets, philosophers and blessed souls known to us is Goswami Tulsidas. This saint, born in India in the 16th century, was a great devotee of Lord Ram, the incarnate Supreme Being. Tulsidas was not an ordinary poet or saint; he was an apostle of the Lord sent especially on this earth to spread the message of love, devotion and faith for the Supreme Being in the form of Sri Ram, a form that the common man could easily relate to and understand. Tulsidas propagated the divine story of Lord Ram and made the Lord's holy Name a household name through his writings, thereby making spiritual liberation and deliverance easily available to the common man, and bringing the Supreme Being nearer to him and his heart than ever before.

His message of having love, devotion, faith and submission for Lord Ram as a way to find eternal liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death, as a means of finding freedom from the formidable shackle of miseries and torments that constantly harass a creature in this deluding world in which all the living beings find themselves trapped, and to obtain emancipation and salvation for their souls which would lead to their ultimate and final peace, tranquility and blissful rest, was heartily accepted and welcomed by the masses for its simplicity of approach, and for the freedom that it provided them from elaborate rituals and formalities as ordained in the ancient scriptures which the common man found extremely difficult, impractical and cumbersome to follow.

While the original scriptures were written in the classical language of India, known as Sanskrit, that was limited to the higher and learned classes, therefore making these scriptures beyond the reach of the common man, Tulsidas wrote in the local dialect known as Avadhi, which is a branch of the main language known as Hindi that is spoken throughout the central planes of India. It was the language of the masses, and therefore the writings of Tulsidas became instantly understandable, accessible and dear to the populace.

He wrote about the divine story of Lord Ram in a poetical style that fluently employed the various Raagas (tones, metres and notes) of Indian classical music as well as folk music. This immediately was acceptable by the people as compared to the chanting of the hymns in a staccato manner, or discourses that were dry and boring for the masses. After a hard day's toil, a common man found rejuvenation and refreshment when he sang a part of Tulsidas' verses rather than hear or read some long-winding discourse telling him about some distant and unknown God.

So we come to the next important contribution of Tulsidas in the field of spiritualism and religion. Through his writings he spread the message that having love, devotion, faith and submission for Lord Ram, who is no one else but incarnate Supreme Being known as Parmeshwar, the Supreme Ishwar, and the Lord God, is the easiest and most convenient method for finding Mukti (liberation and deliverance), Shanti (peace and tranquility), Shukha (happiness and joy) and Anand (bliss).

For achieving this aim the individual needed only to inculcate the habit of constantly remembering the Lord and focusing his mind on him and his holy Name, a method which the scriptures defined as Yoga. While Yoga was complicated,

cumbersome, time consuming and aimed at an abstract form of God, the philosophy of Bhakti (love, devotion, dedication for the Supreme Being) as propagated by Tulsidas centered on Lord Ram as the Divinity personified, the Lord whose divine form and mystical deeds were easily documented and readable, making them understandable and within reach of the common man. This methodology brought this same hitherto abstract God extremely near to the common man, and made the God dear to him. The method of story-telling and singing the Lord's glories through melodious verses and hymns instantly struck an emotional and lovable common cord with the individual who now felt that Mukti and spiritual Shanti was not only limited to the high and the mighty as their exclusive prerogative, but he has also the same right over them.

It is obvious that any person can easily relate to an event or a personality which is common to his own experience and knowledge of the world he is acquainted with, rather than some divine Being who is intractable, unknown, invisible and living in a world beyond the wildest of one's imagination. So the net effect was that the Supreme Being was made accessible, approachable and available to the common man by saint Tulsidas through his writings, and the philosophy of Bhakti (devotion, dedication, love, faith, submission, constant remembrance etc.) that they preached.

The books and philosophy of Tulsidas dedicated to having 'Bhakti' for Lord Ram as an infallible remedy for all spiritual and worldly ills and misfortunes have spread like wild-fire amongst the masses, making him more popular than any other single poet or author of the land. This singular fact that the acclaim and respect that Tulsidas has generated down the centuries, which no one else has managed to match, vouches for the greatness of his writings, the deep import of the message of spiritualism and love for the Supreme God that they contain, the correctness and the truthfulness of his approach and preaching, and the especial blessedness of his soul.

There was one more big benefit and reward to humanity from the books of Tulsidas. The society was presented with the noble and ideal character of a king known as 'Ram' whose exemplary life and highly correct conduct set a bench-mark for others to emulate themselves and teach others to follow. It showed man that when the Supreme Being became a human being, he himself had to undergo all the throes of pain and sufferings as well as bouts of joys and happiness that all of them have experienced in their own lives to a lesser or greater degree. But in spite of all these ups and downs of life, Lord Ram maintained the highest level of moral and emotional standards as prescribed by the scriptures. This is therefore possible for them—all members of the society—to do.

After all, there have been hundreds and thousands of great kings, emperors, conquerors and rulers in this world, and all had faithful bards lauding their achievements in glorious and colourful terms—but all faded away on the sand of time; none of them are called 'God'. It is only Lord Ram who is eternally remembered as the saviour and the redeemer, so obviously there must be a difference between him and the rest. So by following the path walked by Lord Ram himself as narrated by Tulsidas, the individual man can be sure that he is following the best path that can be followed in his life. In other words, the common man had a practical and handy guide to show him the correct and the righteous way during the course of his routine life and his dealings with this mundane and humdrum world—this is another great contribution of Tulsidas and his writings.

So we see how the Supreme Lord of this creation has used this great apostle and messenger of his, i.e. saint Goswami Tulsidas, to help the creatures of this creation, the subjects of the loving God's vast realm, come closer to their dear Lord

and find their ultimate redemption by the easiest path that can be made available to them in this world of fast-paced life, contradictory and confusing doctrines, lack of proper spiritual guidance, and moral degradation.

The books of Tulsidas are like pitchers full of ambrosia for finding eternal peace of the mind and the heart. Just like fish feels refreshed when submerged in water, the soul of the individual person would feel refreshed and rejuvenated by keeping its self submerged in the nectar of Lord's love and devotion by way of singing and remembering the divine deeds and stories associated with Lord Ram who is a known and a visible incarnation of the Supreme Being as narrated and sung by the great Tulsidas.

Now, let us read about Goswami Tulsidas' life and works.

Since great saints and sages did not wish themselves to be praised but preferred that their Lord be praised and worshipped instead, so therefore Tulsidas wrote next to nothing about himself. All accounts of his life are available from contemporary accounts and circumstantial evidences as well as analysis of his writings by modern scholars and researchers. Thus, certain controversies and distractions are bound to exist, but here we shall read the most accepted version of this saint's life and works.

Goswami Tulsidas was born in the Hindu year Samvat 1589, corresponding to 1532 A.D. His birth place is known as Rajapur (pronounced as *Raajaapur*). This is a small hamlet in the central part of India, and it is located in the district of Banda near the city of Allahabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

The day of the birth was the Hindu day of Sraawan Shukla Saptami which corresponds roughly to the seventh day of the bright lunar fortnight in the fifth Hindu month known as Sraawan that falls in late July to mid August.

The time of his birth is believed to be very inauspicious—it was an asterism known as Mula that was on the ascent at that time. This period is called 'Abhuktamula', and it is said that a child born under this asterism brings death to its parents.

The child himself was very odd—he was born after full twelve month in the mother's womb, and at the time of his birth he had the full complement of teeth.

This frightened the parents out of their wits. The only way was to either abandon the child or not look at his face for eight long years.

His parents were extremely poor Brahmins. His father was Atma-ram Dubey, and his mother was Hulsī. [According to some accounts, the surname of his father was 'Shukla' instead of 'Dubey'.] As destined, his mother Hulsī died on the fifth day of his birth. The father was heart-broken and overcome with superstition. He abandoned the child.

The midwife who had delivered the child was named Muniya. Her mother-in-law was named Chuniya. It was this kind lady who took care of the abandoned child and fed him. As ill fate would have it, Chuniya too died when the child was six years old. His father refused to accept him and so the child was made an orphan!

The mother was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to worship the sacred Tulsi plant regularly. So, the family guru or the family priest called the child 'Tulsi'. This was his first name.

There is another version which says that the family priest of the child was himself known as Tulsidas, and he gave the child the name of 'Tularam' (pronounced as *Tulaaraam*). It was abbreviated to 'Tulsi'.

Anyhow, when the child was forced to fend for himself at the age of six years as outlined above, he went from door to door begging for food, and as his signal call to announce his coming and request the household to give him alms he used to say aloud 'Ram'. So the people began to call him 'Ram-bola'—literally meaning someone who says or calls out Ram.

The Supreme Lord of the world has his own mysterious ways, and when he selects someone to fulfill his divine mandate and become his apostle, the Lord takes full charge of his life. All great souls are born like ordinary human beings—no one drops from air like rain—and it is what they do later on in life, what they give to the society, what mankind learns from them and how it benefits from their teachings, their message and their legacy is what that really matters, and it is what that makes them stand out as a colossus and a tall landmark on the landscape of humanity.

And so it happened that a saint named Narhari-das, a descendant of the great seer and sage named Ramanand, had a vision (dream) that he must pick up a helpless child who was orphaned and abandoned by the world, and instruct him about the divine story of Lord Ram. Narhari-das spotted the poor boy and took him under his wings, developing a special affinity with him because of the divine order.

Narhari-das took the boy called Ram-bola to Ayodhya and performed his sacred thread ceremony. It was on this occasion that Ram-bola was rechristened as 'Tulsi-ram'. The two—Narhari-das and Tulsiram—lived for about ten months at Ayodhya, the birth place of Lord Ram and the capital of his kingdom during the Lord's sojourn on earth. Even during this short stay, the boy was completely enthralled by the immortal story of the Lord which he used to hear in rapt attention at a number of places where it was traditionally said and repeated in this holy town. The hidden spark of divinity and holiness as well as the fire of love for his beloved Lord Ram that lay hidden in his bosom and concealed in his heart got its first puff of rejuvenation here, and this hitherto concealed fire was later on to become a raging all-engulfing fire of total submission for his beloved Lord Ram, a fire of unquestioned and undiluted love and devotion as well as the unstoppable longing for attaining Lord Ram that not only overtook the entire being of Tulsidas alone but it also swept across the length and breadth of the land.

Narhari-das took Tulsiram to a place called 'Sukar-kshetra' that is near Ayodhya at the confluence of the rivers Saryu and Ghagra. Here they lived for the next five years.

Another learned man named Shesha Sanaatan came visiting, and he took Tulsiram with him to Varanasi, a holy city traditionally held as the center of learning and education in the classics and languages from ancient times. It was here that Tulsiram was re-named 'Tulsidas' by his new guru Sanaatan.

At Varanasi Tulsidas learnt Sanskrit language and its grammar. He was introduced to literature devoted to the theme closest to his heart—the theme of Lord Ram. He read the versions of the Lord's story as narrated by sages Valmiki and Veda Vyas, as well as the various Purans and other ancient texts. Tulsidas literally gulped down these texts like a hungry man partaking of delicious food for the first time in his life. He was extremely bright and mastered the finer nuances of the language and the ancient texts.

Gradually his name and fame spread as an eligible bachelor who was an expert teacher and a scholar par-excellence. He used to teach and preach the Purans and the versions of the Ramayana, and earned his livelihood as well as renown. A Brahmin family of the Bharadwaj lineage lived in a village known as Taarpita which was across the river Yamuna from Tulsidas' ancestral village of Rajapur. The head of the

family was a Brahmin named Deen Bandhu Paathak. He had a beautiful daughter named Ratnawali (Ratnaawali). When he heard about the great name and fame of Tulsidas he married his daughter Ratnawali to him.

Tulsidas and Rathawali had a son named 'Tarapati' (Taaraapati). But unfortunately the child died early in infancy. Besides this single tragedy, Tulsidas' married life was otherwise happily spent for fifteen years. Tulsidas loved his wife passionately and he could not think of ever living without her even for a day.

Now let us see how the remarkable change came into his life—a change that turned this scholarly household man who used to spend his days like an ordinary scholarly person giving discourses and preaching the scriptures and earning his livelihood into a legend even during his lifetime, someone who left us a legacy of Bhakti and Mukti that are easily accessible, as well as a rich heritage of devotional literature of exceptional beauty and charm like the world has never seen before.

There are two versions of the incident that was the turning point in his life, and which made this hitherto passionate man renounce the world completely along with all its attractions, and instead devote the rest of his life in total submission to his beloved Lord Ram, a life of total submersion in the ocean of love and devotion for Lord Ram who was the beloved of his soul.

The first version is as follows. It happened that once his brother-in-law came visiting the household of Tulsidas. Tulsidas had to go out on some assignment to preach the Purans for eleven days. So his wife Ratnawali took his permission and went with her brother to her parent's home, promising to come back before Tulsidas returns. But when he came back from his assignment he found that she hadn't come. So enamoured was Tulsidas with his wife that he could not wait for her arrival, and he set out forthwith to his in-law's place. It was night and the river Yamuna was in spate, but Tulsidas didn't have patience left in him. So he caught hold of a floating corpse and crossed over to the other side. When he reached his in-law's place, he got due respect, but Ratnawali was shocked and dismayed at his behaviour; she felt embarrassed at his conduct and thought that people in her village would start passing lurid and lascivious comments when they come to hear the developments the next morning. Besides this, she wished good for her husband's spiritual welfare because she was no ordinary woman. She thought to her self that her husband had been teaching and preaching the scriptures for so long a time but had not understood any tiny bit of their meaning. So she scolded him when they were alone. The essence of what she said is this—'Look. The amount of love and passion that you have for me and my body made of bones and flesh, how wonderful would it have been if you had even half of it for Lord Ram whom you preach about, who has taken care of you when no one else bothered, and who fills your stomach even now.'

Tulsidas' eyes of wisdom opened instantly. He got up and retraced his steps immediately. Ratnawali was again shocked. She did not mean that her husband would abandon her. Her scolding was supposed to be a normal tiff between a wife and a husband, and was nothing as serious as it turned out to be.

Anyway, Tulsidas turned away from this humdrum life once and for all. Broken and devastated, Ratnawali lived thereafter like a hermitess, spending some time in her maternal village and sometime in the village of her brother-in-law named Nanda-das. It is believed that she composed 201 Dohas, two-line verses having devotional and spiritual tone. She died in Samvat 1651 (A.D. 1594).

According to the other version, when Tulsidas reached his in-law's house, all were asleep. He caught hold a serpent to climb the boundary wall, thinking the serpent to be a rope, and called out the people inside to open the gates. All woke up, but

Ratnawali was extremely peeved and she scolded Tulsidas in the manner described above.

Moving out for ever, Tulsidas went on a pilgrimage to all the sacred places, and finally settled down in Varanasi. He was already well-known here as a scholar and a great devotee of the Lord. Tulsidas began spending his time preaching the texts of the Sanskrit versions of the Ramayana but thought to himself that he better write the divine story of Lord Ram in the local dialect for the benefit of the masses. Again, he decided that it was the best form of meditation and contemplation for him which will have a two-pronged benefit—one was that his days and time would be spent constructively in remaining submerged in the thoughts of his beloved Lord Ram, and second he would leave behind a legacy that would generate devotion, dedication and love for the Lord in the heart of the coming generations down the ages. He realised that the story of Lord Ram was till that time in Sanskrit, a language of the scholars and not of the common man, so there was the great need of speaking and writing in the common man's language so that the Lord's story became easily readable and understandable by him. Thus, by his writings Tulsidas brought Lord Ram and his divine name closer home and nearer to every ordinary household, every single individual on the land.

It is said that the local people of Varanasi recognized his scholarship and he was made an Abbott of a monastery, known as a Mattha. It was this appointment that bestowed the title 'Goswami' upon him because it is a title of honour. The word also means someone who has learnt to exercise control over the sense organs. This Mattha came to be known as the 'Tulsidas Mattha', but by Samvat 1848 (A.D. 1791) it was renamed as 'Sthaan Tulsidas'.

Tulsidas wrote for approximately 50-60 years of his life. Amongst his contemporary poets and saints with whom he came in contact are the following—Surdas, Nanda-das, Mirabai and Keshav-das. It is also known that a Muslim chieftain named Abdur-rahim Khaan-khaana, who was a governor and administrator of Varanasi, and a rich Hindu landlord named Todarmal were greatly influenced by Tulsidas and had great respect for him.

There is a popular legend associated with Tulsidas. We shall cite some of the well known ones here.

There was a criminal who would call out 'in the name of Ram, give alms to this murderer'. Tulsidas was so delighted and overwhelmed when he would hear the name of this beloved Ram being called out that he would take this criminal to his austere place and share whatever food he had with him. This of course led to great scorn and anger amongst the orthodox Brahmins who demanded an explanation from Tulsidas. He told them that once this man has said 'Ram' all his sins were wiped away. Infuriated further, the Brahmins said that if he had this much faith in the Lord and if what he said is the truth then he must prove it. The test was that if the stone bull placed in a Shiva temple would eat from the hands of the criminal it would be proved that what Tulsidas said was correct, otherwise they would castrate him from the society. On the designated day, to the wonder of all assembled to watch the spectacle, the stone bull actually ate from the hands of the criminal!

This made his tormentors more jealous of him. They hired a professional thief and told him to enter his house in the night and steal his manuscripts. When the thief came in he found Tulsidas sleeping blissfully but two young boys, with bow and arrow in hand, were guarding his house. They were Lord Ram and Laxman themselves. The thief beat a hasty retreat out of fear for his life, and then become Tulsidas' great admirer.

The continued harassment of Tulsidas made him appeal to Lord Hanuman, the most beloved devotee of Lord Ram and himself a manifestation of Lord Shiva, to help him. Hanuman asked Tulsidas in a dream to write a prayerful petition to Lord Ram seeking the Lord's intervention. It is believed that these prayers turned out to be the text of the book 'Vinai Patrika' that Tulsidas wrote.

There is another fascinating legend related to his life. It says that everyday after his morning ablutions Tulsidas would pour some water at the base of the holy banyan tree. A spirit that lived on that tree and suffered due to some mistakes of the past evil deeds was able to quench its thirst and heard the divine name of Ram which Tulsidas would utter while pouring water. The spirit was absolved of its sins and found liberation. So it blessed Tulsidas and told him that he can have a wish fulfilled. Tulsidas wanted a Darshan (holy sight) of his beloved Ram, and so he asked for this boon. The spirit told him that an old beggar-like man attends his discourses everyday; he comes first, sits at the back of the congregation, and is the last to leave. He would help Tulsidas to meet Ram. Next day, Tulsidas found him out and caught hold of his legs—beseeching him to make him see Ram. This old man was no one else but Lord Hanuman in disguise.

He advised Tulsidas that he should go to Chitrakoot, a place amongst the mountains where Lord Ram had spent the earlier part of his forest exile, and there he will have a Darshan of the Lord. Tulsidas went to Chitrakoot and made it his habit to first take a bath in the river there and then prepare a paste of sandalwood that he would apply to his own forehead and to those devotees who came to take a bath in the river, saying the name of Ram each time. Shortly after his coming, one day Lord Ram appeared before him and asked him to give some sandalwood paste and apply it on the Lord's forehead. Not only this, the Lord applied the paste to Tulsidas' forehead with his own hands. What more would Tulsidas want! He got the fruit of his life. He became ecstatic and immediately went into a trance-like state of extreme bliss known as Samadhi that is said to have lasted for the next three days.

There is a verse commemorating this event. It is as follows—

*चित्रकूट के घाट पर भई संतन की भीड़ ।
तुलसीदास चंदन धिसें तिलक देत रघुवीर ॥*

It means 'On the banks of a river in Chitrakoot, there is a crowd of saints and holy people. Tulsidas is rubbing sandalwood to make a paste, and Raghubir (Lord Ram) uses this paste to make the mark of the Tilak on their foreheads.' [The Tilak is a sign consisting of three parallel horizontal lines that are made on the forehead of devotees of Lord Vishnu using paste of sandalwood.]

Once he had gone to Vrindavan to visit the holy sites associated with Lord Krishna. In the main temple there he addressed the presiding deity and sang that he would bow his head only if the Lord holds a bow and arrow (like Lord Ram). It is said that immediately, to the amazement of all present, the idol of Lord Krishna was seen holding a bow and arrow. Tulsidas fell down like a rod to pay his obeisance to his beloved Lord Ram who had revealed there and then on the altar. There is a subtle message in this incident—that all forms of the Lord are the same, whether it is the form known as Lord Krishna or the form known as Lord Ram. What one needs to see his beloved Lord everywhere in this creation is love, devotion, dedication, conviction, faith and sincerity that are deep and truthful—if these qualities are there, the Lord is also there.

There is one more episode of historical authenticity that is worth recounting here. It is believed that the Mughal Emperor Jahangir had heard of the mystical

powers of Tulsidas. When he met Tulsidas once, he asked him to show some miracle. Tulsidas refused, saying that he knew no black magic, and the only thing he knew was the name of 'Ram'. This obviously angered the emperor, who was not accustomed to such blunt replies, so he ordered that Tulsidas be imprisoned. 'Let me see how your Ram saves you now,' rebuked Jahangir. It is believed that a fierce bunch of monkeys attacked the fort and the prison, wreaking havoc all around. Jahangir realised that Tulsidas was not an ordinary man, and he relented. He not only released Tulsidas from prison but gave him gifts in the form of gold and silver coins. It is a belief that Tulsidas used that money to build Hanuman's temple at Varanasi with moulded the Lord's image his own hands.

Tulsidas left his mortal coil (body) in Varanasi on the banks of the holy river Ganges at the Assi Ghat. The day was Sraavan Shukla Saptami of Samvat 1680 (A.D. 1623). According to another account, the day was Sraavan Badi Teej, and this day is regarded as more authentic because it is followed as the death anniversary of Tulsidas by the descendants of Todarmal who regard Tulsidas as their Guru. [Shukla Saptami is the seventh day of the bright half of the lunar month, while Badi Teej is the third day of the dark half. Sraawan is the fifth Hindu month falling roughly between end of July and mid of August.]

Tulsidas was exceptional and unique because besides being a scholar and a learned man-of-letters, he was an enlightened soul especially empowered by the Holy Spirit of the Lord himself to spread the message of love and devotion for the Lord as a means of attaining spiritual purity, peace and bliss alongside the opportunity of attaining emancipation and salvation for the individual's soul, known as the Atma. Tulsidas adopted the simplified method of remembering the Lord through the medium of the Lord's deeds in this world. This helped Tulsidas to ever remain submerged in the thoughts of Lord Ram, and to keep his mind focused on the Divinity and away from this deluding world and its entangling spiritual mess. This is what the essence of Yoga is—to remain focused on the 'Truth' and exclude all that is the 'untruth'.

This was a form of meditation and contemplation for Tulsidas; it helped him to divert his mind from the affairs of the mundane world around him and focus it instead on the Divine Being who lived in this external world as Lord Ram and as the Atma, the pure conscious soul, in his inner self. This is also the focus of Yoga, the established and scripturally sanctified way of establishing a union between the individual's soul known as the Atma, and the Supreme Soul of this creation known as the Parmatma. A profound resonance is created when the vibrations of the individual soul begin to correspond with the cosmic vibrations generated by the Supreme Soul, and this leads to what the scriptures recognize as the state of bliss and Samadhi, the state of perpetual ecstasy and bliss.

The reason for his continuously writing so many versions of the same story of Lord Ram in so many different ways—e.g. Ram Charit Manas, Kavitawali, Geetawali, Barvai Ramayan, Vinai Patrika, Dohawali—is that he used this method as a means of meditation on the Supreme Being in his visible form as Lord Ram, and repeating the Lord's holy name as much as possible by continuously writing on this theme as a means of contemplation and fixing his mind on the Divinity instead of anything related to the physical world of material objects. This was a profound form of Yoga for him as it helped him to establish a communion of his soul with the Supreme Soul represented by Lord Ram.

This is what Tulsidas subtly taught us—to become eternally blissful by remaining engrossed in the thoughts of the Divinity that is bliss personified, and enjoy the happiness that comes with the realisation that the Supreme Lord, our protector and redeemer, is not only always with us but also exceptionally easy to access without any hassle and formality. And the tool for this achievement is to keep the Lord eternally in our mind and heart by keeping them submerged in his thoughts. This is easily done by reading, hearing, telling and discussing about the Lord's divine story in all its myriad variations and colourful versions.

In order to achieve this end, Tulsidas wrote prolifically on the theme of Lord Ram as an incarnation of Divinity, as the Supreme Being living himself in our midst in the form of Lord Ram's holy story!

One great benefit of this approach was that his entire life and time was spent in the form of one huge Yoga, done continuously and unbroken. He did not remain satisfied by writing one book, say the Ram Charit Manas, but wrote three other books to narrate the same story—these are the Kavitawali and the Geetawali. These two books supplemented and complimented the epic story which was narrated in the Ram Charit Manas. There were certain events in the epic life of Lord Ram that the great soul Tulsidas wished to add more colour and vibrancy to, so he decided to mould them in the form of music and song. A song that is sung melodiously is more heart warming and heart touching than mere narration of events no matter how beautifully they have been narrated. So he wrote the Kavitawali and the Geetawali—both these narrate the same story of Lord Ram's life and deeds but in a pattern that is set to different 'Raagas' which are musical notes, metres and tones of classical Indian music. It is practically observed in our day to day life that one can easily recall some song, sing it comfortably and hum its musical tune more easily as compared to reciting some regular text of a classical book.

The books of Tulsidas—As has been noted above, Tulsidas spent his life preaching, teaching and writing about his beloved Lord Ram. The following books are universally regarded as being written by him. The list is according to the year and period of his life when he wrote them.

1. Vairaagya Sandipani—it was written roughly between Samvat 1626 and 1627 (A.D. 1569-70).
2. Ram-agya-prashna—it was written roughly between Samvat 1627 and 1628 (A.D. 1570-71).
3. Ram-lalaa Nahachhu—it was written roughly between Samvat 1628 and 1629 (A.D. 1571-72).
4. Janki Mangal—it was written roughly between Samvat 1629 and 1630 (A.D. 1572-73).
5. Ram Charit Manas—the writing of this great epic was started in Samvat 1631 (A.D. 1574)---but the date of conclusion is not determined.
6. Parvati Mangal—again, it was started in Samvat 1643 (A.D. 1586)---the date of conclusion is not determined.
7. Geetawali (Ram Geetawali)—it was written roughly between Samvat 1630 and 1670 (A.D. 1573-1613).
8. Vinai Patrika—it was written roughly between Samvat 1631 and 1679 (A.D. 1574-1622).
9. Dohawali—it was written roughly between Samvat 1626 and 1680 (A.D. 1569-1623).

10. Varvai Ramayan—it was written roughly between Samvat 1630 and 1680 (A.D. 1573-1623).
11. Kavitawali—it was written roughly between Samvat 1631 and 1680 (A.D. 1574-1623).
12. Hanuman Baahuk—it was written roughly between Samvat 1631 and 1680 (A.D. 1574-1623).
13. Krishna Geetawali—it was written roughly between Samvat 1643 and 1660 (A.D. 1586-1603).

Now, let us very briefly glance at what these thirteen books are about. Tulsidas' magnum opus is unquestionably the Ram Charit Manas. It is the most revered and sacred text, known universally as the Ramayana, which is the narrative of the divine story of the life and times of Lord Ram who was the incarnate Supreme Being on earth. It is universally regarded as the bench-mark for the narrative of the holy story of Lord Ram.

The Geetawali and Kavitawali are variations of the Ramayana as they also describe the divine story of Lord Ram but use the different Raagas (notes, metres and tones) of classical music of India to narrate the different events in Lord Ram's life.

The Barvai Ramayan is also another such book which narrates the story of Lord Ram, but it is shorter than the above two books. It uses two-line verses called Barvai Chand instead of the Raagas.

The Dohawali is a compilation of two-line couplets dealing with a host of topics covering ethics, morality, proper ways of conduct and behaviour, matters concerning society and politics, daily problems of life and how to cope with them, and of course the theme of having reliance on the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram for being assured of all-round wellbeing and welfare.

The Vairagya Sandipani is a short work like the Barvai Ramayan, and it highlights the characters and virtuousness of those who have renounced all attractions of the material world and have completely surrendered themselves to Lord Ram, thereby developing the virtues that make a man a true saint and holy.

The Janki Mangal and Parvati Mangal are two books that describe the marriage of Lord Ram with Sita and Lord Shiva with Parvati in a poetic style laced with devotion and affection for the respective Lord. The verses of these two books were traditionally recited during marriage ceremonies in Indian homes as auspicious charms that brought happiness and wellbeing to the newly wed couples.

In this genre falls the other short book called Ram Lalaa Nachu. It pertains to a ceremony that is part of the overall marriage rituals in Indian homes. During this, the head and the beard of the groom are shaved and his nails cut before the actual marriage begins. It is usually done just before the marriage party starts for the venue of the marriage rituals. The book describes this ceremony for Lord Ram prior to his marriage with Sita. It is meant to complement Janki Mangal.

The Hanuman Baahuk was written by Tulsidas towards the end of his life when he suffered from severe attack of pain in his arms ('Baahu'). He prays to Lord Hanuman to relieve him of this agony. It is believed that Tulsidas was cured of this disease after he prayed to Hanuman using the hymns of this book.

And finally we have the Krishna Geetawali. It so happened that another great saint named Surdas, who was his contemporary, had a friendly exchange with Tulsidas, saying that he did not know that Ram and Krishna were the same Divinity in two forms. Surdas was perhaps referring to incident when Tulsidas didn't bow before

the image of Lord Krishna when he visited Vrindavan till the Lord held a bow and an arrow.

To prove that it was not so, that he only loved the image of the Lord with the bow and arrow though he knew that there is no difference between Ram and Krishna, Tulsidas wrote Krishna Geetawali that describes the holy story of Lord Krishna. Not to be outdone, Surdas did the same in the reverse order—that is, though he was an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna, he wrote a book titled ‘Ram Charitawali’ that describes the story of Lord Ram just like Tulsidas’ Krishna Charitawali that describes the story of Lord Krishna.

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Appendix - 5

Letter to Lord Sri Ram by the Author of this Book

'Lord, why are you cross with me?'

My dearest, sweetest and most beloved Ram!

I hope this letter-cum-petition of mine will find patient audience with you (because through this I want to talk to you).

I don't know how you are, but as for me, I am both miserable and happy, sorry and thankful simultaneously. Miserable because for such a long time, such a long journey through life I've walked and walked till my legs have become too weary to walk further and demand rest, happy because I had you by my side in thick and thin, in rain and sun-shine, and I am glad I had such a caring companion whom I could call my 'own' without any reservations, and with aplomb, and despite the ups and downs of life. (Remember? We fought and laughed, shared our dreams and thoughts and the nitty gritty of life; we made promises, broke them, repented and wept, and were nevertheless fast friends all over once again). Sorry because I gave you so much trouble, was burdensome on you and was a source of constant nuisance value and annoyance for you, thankful because you still bore with me, cared, loved and had a tender corner in your heart for me. You never grumbled. I didn't overtly acknowledge it, but nevertheless I knew and realised it.

And dear, what a life and what a long, arduous and turbulent journey it has been! Almost like a sine curve. Earlier on, life appeared gilded and rosy, but destiny had different plans in store for me—I was flung like a kite without a string from the crest of the sine curve, as it were. Drifting, plummeting, soaring and plunging in bouts of utter despairs and joys, and in troughs and crests of the wave—it was like one big roller-coaster exam in 'para diving'. Is it not important that in this terrifying turmoil, I clung to you, to the belief in my heart that I'll not be forsaken by you, that this 'kite' has the unbreakable string of your name to anchor it firmly in the invisible hands of the one whose name it was, when there was no solid land underneath my legs. Then, I didn't forget you, did I? Was I disloyal to you? *So why are you cross with me?*

When the tidal wave of time and circumstances pulled the rug from under my tired feet, when in abject despair and very distraught, I left my homestead with no moorings in sight in this dark, broad, wide, stretched-till-horizon and lonely world, nay, when I simply jumped off the crest of the sine curve spontaneously—because sliding down it to the nether world would have been equally disastrous—to get one last fresh breath of air before I dashed on the dark ocean below, it was then that suddenly, unperceptibly and miraculously the string-less kite of my life felt the tug. Lo and behold! It was not adrift rudderless after all, for an invisible string held by an invisible hand was slowly gliding me down. I quite vividly remember I told my father before we separated—never to meet again—not to worry about me for I am leaving home to visit my Father. That the ferocious, cruel swipe of 'Kaal' swept me off my feet was no fault of mine. Still, I remembered and loved you, am I not right? *So, why are you cross with me?*

Come! Come! Let my foster father, whom I'll never see again, look at me from heavens now and be comforted how happy I am in the lap of my true Father—I was

welcomed by Him with a carpet of rose petals, as it were. He even removed the thorns Himself because I wasn't accustomed to them. He didn't let me labour; He held the umbrella for me; He did not let me die uncared for! Dear, tell me, is not a father one's true, sincere, best friend? So what wrong did I do when I called my Father as my friend, and aren't you one, aren't you both (or, was it the other way round, I called my friend my Father)? *So, why are you cross with me?*

I had never believed in lip-services. Formal prayers, worship, rituals, rosary, Mantras are for me a mere formality—they are offered to Gods and Lords, not to one who is the dearest of dear and who is more pleased with a drop of salty, but affectionate, tear of remembrance than a casket full of perfumed, sweetened nectar. So I never did it. *So, why are you cross with me?*

I feel very lonely without you. One does not have to remember a 'breath' or 'air' because one does not live without it. Even a 'moment' was a long time interval to keep alive without you. So I didn't climb a mountain to echo that I love you. *So, why are you cross with me?*

And, besides, true friends do not require constant appeasements and reminders of their mutual affection—in fact, that would be tantamount to superficiality. For a tree having deep roots, daily waterings to survive or nourishment are useless, and neither can it be uprooted by storms or floods so easily. So I didn't bother to search for a hose pipe or water. *So, why are you cross with me?*

I never turned the rosary (why should I when every breath is the bead); I never bowed my head (why, aren't you present above my head); I never recited the Mantras (why, which Mantra did Ajamil or Jatau or Sabari recite?). I didn't wish the stiff upper-lipped, stiff-necked, starched, rigid, crusty, flaked and parched task master called 'formality' to interfere with our tender, succulent, sweet-and-sour relationship. So I shut the door to all these, and these wretcheds filled your ears against me. *So, why are you cross with me?*

I remember how you had rushed to meet Bharat at Chitrkoot—forgetting where your bows and arrows were, how dishevelled your clothes were, stumbling and flying as fast as your legs would carry you. And how you embraced Bharat!

“बरबस लिए उठाइ उर लाए कृपानिधान। भरत राम की मिलनि लखि बिसरे सबहि अपान॥

“barabasa li'ē uṭhā'i ura lā'ē kṛpānidhāna.

bharata rāma kī milani lakhi bisarē sabahi apāna.”

(Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 240.)

And how you had dashed to the door to welcome the wretched Sudama at Dwarka! Remember? How you embraced him? Sudama had bought four fistfuls of dry puffed rice for you as a visiting gift. I too have not come empty-handed! I have bought some 4-5 books I have written for you while alone, as a gift. Books! You ask me, why books? Oh come on! Don't you remember, like Sudama, you used to jest and taunt me while in our younger days that I was too much of a book-worm, and I had often told you to stop frolicking around with your antics? So, look! You couldn't write a single line yourself (why would you, for you were proud of being the embodiment of knowledge and essence of the Vedas themselves) and I have written such a horrible-reading tome for you. So what if I didn't bring rice for you like Sudama. *So, why are you cross with me?*

And, Oh wretched me! Ah! I didn't bring even as much as a garland for you. So what, I have my slender-as-garland arms to offer you round your neck. *So, why are you cross with me?*

And Kewat had had the fortune of river Ganges nearby, so he could use its holy waters to wash your feet. How stupid I am, I didn't bring even a cupful to wash your feet—but, hold! So what, I have my tears and my palms for that purpose; and remember, tears are warmer and salty, so they would be more comfortable and soothing for your tired legs as compared to the cold, polluted water of the river. So I didn't bring water! *So, why are you cross with me?*

Tulsidas had sought the intercession of Sitaji (Vinai-Patrika, verse no. 41, 42), Hanuman, Ganesh, Shiva etc. (verse no. 36), Laxman (verse no. 37), Bharat (verse no. 39) and Shatrughan (verse no. 40) to approach you. What the hell? I wanted to approach you directly without any intermediary. It is not that they would not have helped me—in fact, they would only have facilitated my passage to you—but I still wished to stand in front of you directly for I was sure that when you see me, my miserable and appalling condition, my wrinkled, weather beaten face, sunken cheeks, grey and dishevelled hairs, unkept and crumpled clothes, dragging and staggering gait, bent posture, and a tear-drop welling-up in the corners of my lustre-less eyes, I am dead sure that that would be more compelling and forceful to serve my purpose. So, I dared to gate-crash on you! *So, why are you cross with me?*

All in all, you can't beat me with your tricks and logics and antics even as you couldn't in my life-long journey. Remember, I always won? I always had my right of way? Or was it that you made me win even as you had made your brothers and other children of Ayodhya win at games?

Oh my, gotcha! So the secret is out! The cat is out of the bag at last, as it were! *Your'e NOT crossed with me after all! Hurrah!*

For then, you wouldn't have held my kite when it was adrift in the sky, you wouldn't have made me comfortable more than my father could, you wouldn't have told Hanuman stealthily to hold my pen while you dictated these books I so foolishly call as been written by me, you wouldn't have rushed to meet me like Bharat or Sudama..... and, and you wouldn't have promised to take care of my last seconds even as you had done for Jatau and Sabari, and to let me find a permanent home in your own heart even as the soul of Ravana or Sishupal had found theirs in you. So its official now! *You aren't cross with me!*

You aren't cross with me for sure, but just seem to be playing that old game of hide and seek for which you are an expert. But, I shall beat you at your game even here—for I've searched you out in my heart. No joking, this! I have all the trumps up my sleeves. You have hidden in (and occupied) my heart throughout this long, arduous journey of life, making me feel lonely and forlorn outside. Well, when the time comes for me to find a final resting place, I'll also hide inside your heart! Its a fair bargain; a win-win situation for both of us—you have a home now and I will have a home then! Excellent, indeed, friend!

And remember always that you have still to keep the promise you have made to me—that you'll lend me your arms as a pillow to rest my head before I finally close my eyes for good, and your shoulders to lift and carry the bier with yourself as a pall bearer, and your hands to perform my last rites, and your heart to give me a final, eternal resting place. And, never to say 'adieu', Oh dear friend!

But, suddenly I feel morose. Why? Because I could not keep my part of the bargain (or promise) that I had made to you in the dark cavernous womb when I was oblivious of the sunlight outside, but would you also forget yours? I know, and am

intensely certain, you won't—because you hadn't for anyone till date, and that is my only reassurance. And, if what Tulsidas has said in his Vinai-Patrika in verse no. 259/2 is true, I am sure of your mercy also! So, I am happy once again. I am sorry that I was morose—I wouldn't be any more again.

That is all, Oh dear Father and friend! Oh darling, sweetest and most beloved Sri Ram! Keep cheerful and smiling eternally, abidingly. (Even if you weep for me, don't let me know). For I wish you to be always happy, smiling and carefree even as you had always wanted me to be in my life.

I close this humble submission of mine with sweetest of memories, and with lots, lots, lots of love and affection for you, besides of course reverence and respects unbound!

Your son: Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

15th of August, 2017.

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Appendix - 6

About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) www.amazon.com (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
- (b) www.pothi.com (in 'paper-back book' + 'e-book' versions),
- (c) www.draft2digital.com (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) Kobo, (iv) Page Foundry, (v) Scribd, (vi) Tolino etc.--

(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A-1) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi

Ramayan” based on Tulsidas’ Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) “Narad Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) “Shandilya Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitalawali Ramayan); (27) The Great Ancient Sages, Seers, Saints and Enlightened Kings of India; (28) The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitalawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(B) The following Books have been published in ‘Printed-Book Deluxe Editions’ by a reputed Indian Publisher (details given below) :

1. Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition = 6 volumes; 18 parts. [Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads; Vol. 6= Vedanta Concepts explained with specific references to the relevant Upanishads.]

2. English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
4. English rendering of Devi Puran’s Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
5. A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Name and contact of Publisher of above Printed Books listed under (C):

Chaukhamba Publishing House, Delhi. [Sri Neeraj Gupta.]

Email < chaukhambapublishinghouse@gmail.com >

< chaukhamba_neerj@yahoo.com >

Postal Address: 4697/2, Street no. 21-A, (HDFC Bank wali Gali),

Ansari Road, Darayaganj, Delhi—110002.

Phone: Mobile (Neeraj Gupta)—+919811133683

Office: 011-23286537; 011-32996391

(C) Book under preparation:

A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

Contact details of Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia—

Postal address:-36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg, P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123, Distt. Ayodhya (Faizabad), U.P. India.

Phone:—(India) +919451290400; +919935613060.

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Archive.org: < https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: < www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia >

Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia